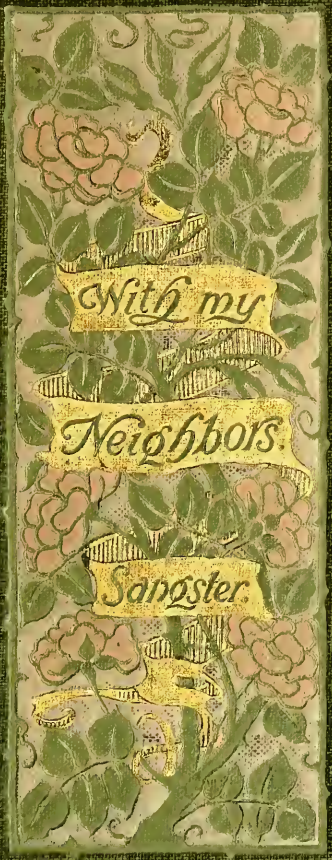
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WITH MY NEIGHBORS

BY

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

AUTHOR OF "ON THE ROAD HOME"
"LITTLE KNIGHTS AND LADIES"
ETC., ETC.

NEW YORK
HARPER & BROTHERS PUBLISHERS
1896

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Affectionately Inscribed

TO MY FRIEND

FRANCES J. DYER

These bits of talk on homely themes address themselves to a fireside audience, and aim only to be helpful to those who face "the common days, the level stretches white with dust." Originally published in "The Congregationalist" *and* "The Christian Intelligencer," *it is at the suggestion of many readers that they are here gathered and arranged in a little book. The poems are included by request.*

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WITH MY NEIGHBORS

I

"TUCKERED OUT"

TUCKERED out! Pardon the homely phrase. Perhaps you know how to define it if you are a woman, up early in the morning and late at night and busy all the hours between.

It is not so much that the back gives out, that the limbs ache, that the hands are unsteady—all this might be borne; but when one is "tuckered out" nerves and temper feel the strain, and she who is usually cheery and pleasant gives an irritable or sarcastic reply, speaks shortly to her husband, and is cross with her children. Poor thing! Her very tongue is tired, and it hurts her to talk; her thoughts are weary, and it is distressing to think. She is "tuckered out."

The sensible thing to do would appear, at any cost, to be the taking of some rest, securing it, if

only by snatches. Because, as a rule, the woman ignores this necessity and fights against her own weakness, holding it to be a credit to her to "keep up till she drops;" sooner or later she does drop—not always into that safe harbor, the grave. Multitudes of hard-working women are saved to their families and to old age by the merciful intervention of long and exhausting fits of illness, from which they slowly convalesce, and during which Nature rallies her forces and prepares the invalids to attack life again, grimly and obstinately as ever.

One such woman I recall, living herself all her days at tremendously high pressure and forcing her family to endure hardness under her unremitting cleaning, cooking, scrubbing, and saving. Never a task too great for her energy; never a summer so hot and so long that the caring for a number of city boarders was not added to the ordinary work. And when most obviously "tuckered out" her people learned to expect a development in which "mother" was not singular. Too weary to essay another step, she would begin cleaning closets! I have known many women in whom physical and mental fatigue expressed itself not in the acceptance of rest, but in the undertaking of more work.

Said an old farmer to me one afternoon, as we drove over a picturesque road in the hill country

of New Jersey: "My wife never was idle one minute in forty years. If she couldn't find anything else to do, she pieced quilts!" We passed her grave in the churchyard, the narrow mound a-bloom with geraniums and roses, for it was summer, and a tall, white shaft proudly expressed the sorrow of her family. "Poor Mary," said the old man, "she was always tuckered out. It's wonderful she can be quiet even in the burying-ground."

To the great army of "tuckered out," middle-aged women, who may not delegate their tasks and do not see how to drop them, I would offer a more excellent way of relief than that afforded by the long spell of rheumatism in the winter or of pneumonia in the spring.

In the first place, be a little less notable. Overlook the dust now and then, or at least put some of the dust-collecting things away. There are in most houses many pretty knickknacks which add something to the housekeeper's cares, since they must be often administered upon by whisk and duster, or else look dull and dingy. Lock these up relentlessly, and bring them out only once in a while upon occasions of ceremony. Let the husband and children oftener add their help, both in the every-day routine, and in emergencies. To do them justice, they like to bear a hand, but the woman who gets "tuckered out" is so clever and

capable that she has no patience with their clumsy efforts. Her swiftness is in despair over their deliberation, and she waves them aside, and goes on herself, which is neither wise nor fair.

As a matter of duty, the weary woman should secure a little rest every day, if only for a half-hour. Lie down, dear lady, a little while in the daytime, or sit down in your easiest chair, put your feet up on another chair and lounge. Do not even think, if you can help yourself, and shut your eyes. After a while, perhaps in a month or more, you will discover that you are not "tuckered out" quite so soon or so often. And perhaps somebody will say to you one of these days, as a girl in a shop did the other day to one of my friends, "Really, madam, for an old person you're quite beautiful."

II

PLANNING FOR PLEASURE

We plan for the education of our children, for the necessary expenses of our households, for our journey next summer, for our new furniture, for the fields we hope to purchase, for the addition we mean to put on the house. We plan for social advancement, for intellectual culture. Often in the midst of our plans the thought comes: "What if the present be full of toil and anxiety? The future will repay us for it all. We are planning for an easeful old age, for days in the land of Beulah."

I sometimes question whether we plan as we ought for our household pleasure. The whole subject of amusements, as related to daily experience, is an interesting and important one, not to be arbitrarily discussed or decided on. Besides, it must be left in most cases to the individual conscience, except with reference to those forms of amusement which by common consent are condemned as unbecoming in decent families.

More latitude with regard to all which comes under the head of entertainment obtains now than in a previous generation, and parents and children more generally take their pleasures together than of old, in which there is a great gain, a visible step in advance.

Whatever our private views about particular amusements, most of us agree that recreation is essential in healthy life, and that we work better if we have occasional play and pastime.

When the children are wee things, trotting about the nursery, filling the house with the music of their merry voices, and occupying the parents' hearts and hands with their daily development, pleasure at home takes care of itself. Father and mother are in danger, just now, as at no other time in life, of losing an interest in the world beyond their fireside. So sweet and so exacting do they find the world within their own walls that they are apt to think and to say that they require no other. "My parents," said a young girl to me not long ago, "fell quite out of the habit of going out when we were all little together, and they have never taken it up again." "I live only for my children," exclaims the young mother, wholly giving up the thought that society or charity has any claim to be considered, and therein making a mistake. A true woman's life

should be symmetrical and many-sided, and husband and children are the gainers when the mother's interests, even in the days when her nursery most dominates her time, extend to a wider sphere, beginning in the home, and thence going outward in blessing.

But after the children have passed the baby softness and sweetness, as they are growing up, and as the time comes when our boys and girls are numbered among the young people of their set and township, there should be planning for pleasure. It will be the easier and more graceful if, from the first, there has been a margin for it in the home life. Whether this is so or not, if the parents are wise they will begin now to include among legitimate expenses some outlay for concert tickets, panoramas, illustrated lectures, and museums. In our larger cities there are museums, picture-galleries, and libraries which, under certain conditions, are open to the public, and parents should count upon visiting these places with their children, restricting, if necessary, the expenses somewhere else, so that this form of outing may be possible. The grand symphony concerts and oratorios, which so delight music-loving people, are great opportunities for family enjoyment, and if it be a question of new bonnets and gowns, new curtains or carpets, or of pleasure in this refined form, let the first go

by all means, and make the larger and more enduring choice.

There should be planning for pleasure in the home evenings. The winter evenings, when the cold and storm outside emphasize the warmth and cheer within, are dear to the home-loving circle. Then, with the daughter who plays seated at the piano, there may be song after song, with the family joining in the chorus. Or the charming book or magazine, the story which all may enjoy, may be brought out, and the older boys or the father will read aloud, while the girls have their fancy work, mamma takes her mending, and grandmother's needles flash in and out as she knits the pretty socks for the reigning baby. The home which has no grandmother is not half so dignified and beautiful as that one over which her benignant presence broods.

I like the plan of a little feast before the happy home evening ends. Maybe there are only the nuts which grew on the dear home farm, the apples sun-tinted in the dear home orchard. Perhaps the cookies and ginger-snaps are plain and wholesome fare, and warranted not to cause a dyspeptic twinge. For this they are the better. Back of the mere eating and drinking, in the social home circle, lies the fact that the taking of informal refreshments always means good-fellowship. If neighbors drop in, all the more are you

to be congratulated. That is a pleasant state of society in which neighborliness is cultivated. It is well in our planning to have one evening in a week, or at least in a fortnight, when everybody knows that we are at home, choosing the evening in such a way that it will not interfere with church engagements.

Much which is recommended for winter evenings may be modified to suit the summer, although the genial weather then invites more naturally to out-door pleasures, picnics, and excursions.

This is the day of the carefully guarded physical life. We have raised the health standard, and hand in hand with this should march a spiritual elevation. Our planning for pleasure will be futile if we do not so guard our hearts and tempers that we shall be unselfish, free from irritation, and ready to pass over annoyances. Trying days will come; trying hours may vex our holidays. There are those in whom peace, the peace of God, is ever regnant, and they have a perpetual feast.

III

THE POWER OF THE UNIT

NOTHING is commoner than the underrating of personal influence. "I would willingly do this or refrain from doing that," says a thoughtful woman, "but of what use would it be? Though *I* refuse to buy ready-made clothing at prices which mean starvation to the wage-earners who made it, a thousand other women will buy it, and my sacrifice will not count except as it inconveniences *me*. Whenever there can be concerted action, an organized movement for the relief of those who drudge and are ill paid, count on my support; but till then I may as well move on with the current."

Such reasoning is based on a fallacy. Back of all concerted measures, back of all organization, is always the personal equation. Each of us, doing simply as her conscience dictates, quietly and for herself deciding questions of policy, really helps to form a better state of public opinion, really does something definite towards the im-

provement she longs for, and builds, though she may not dream it, a stone or two into the foundations of a stronger and more Christian social edifice. Each of us, however obscure, touches life at many points, and at some point or other may touch a nerve that will thrill not one friend only but a community. And if one mother can do nothing more, she can so bring up her own children that they shall scorn an act of injustice, no matter to whom it may be done.

Any specious form of thrift which may possibly mean the half loaf in some tenement-house or the menace to a young girl's virtue in some city street, is not to be done away with by waiting vaguely for action in concert. When American women decline, and not till then, to avail themselves of gowns and corset-covers and skirts that are stitched by weary fingers for a sum which will not keep body and soul together, our seamstresses will be properly paid. But every woman must remind herself of the power of the unit, and resolve that she and her daughters will do the thing that is right and just. We need a revival of the old spirit that made a man declare, "*As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*" Never mind the stand taken by others. Some questions are to be settled between the Lord and ourselves. When holiness shall be written on our least purchase in the thread-and-needle store,

and consecration shall extend to our relations with the girls in our kitchen and the girls who wait on us over the counter, the value of the personal equation will be recognized. That sort of religion put into practice is urgently wanted.

Take the long hours in the shops, for example. If each householder who could do so, without making any verbal pledge except to her own conscience, without joining any society or attending a single meeting, would quietly determine to attend to her own errands before five o'clock or before four o'clock, it would soon cease to be profitable to merchants to keep their shops open after six. If each lady who is a buyer would uniformly treat the girl who is a seller with courtesy and kindness, fewer complaints of rudeness and inattention on the part of the shop-girls would be heard. The power of the unit cannot be overestimated here. The reflex action of courtesy is simply automatic.

Equally in affairs which have to do with what we may call the minor morals the personal equation tells. Because life is barren of interest and the sphere of observation is narrow, or the women in a place have been ground down by work and know little of books, gossip has grown there like an evil weed. Harmless at first, it has gradually become tainted with envy, malice, and lack of charity, till slander and scandal have followed

in the wake of what was originally a kindly though trivial interest in the affairs of a neighborhood.

Lo and behold! there eomes to sueh a community a woman with a soul too large for things so petty—a woman brave and keen-sighted, and tolerant and loving. She utters no word of eensure; she does not even look reproachfully at the gossip-mongers. She simply and sincerely goes on her way, "sowing seeds of kindness," believing the best of everybody and scrupulously attributing the best to everybody, lending here a good book, there a paper; frowning only on the persistently malevolent, but frowning not until the magic of her sunshine has failed, and for love's sake trying to make all whom she meets happy and contented. By the power of her individual example, the sweetness of her personal life, she so transforms that partieular spot that its waste plaees rejoiee and its desert blossoms like the rose.

Try this magie wherever you are. Wait not for some one else to begin. Begin yourself. Do not expect a great ehange to be wrought at once. Nature's mightiest revolutions work silently. Begin yourself. The personal equation will eount.

IV

A CHARM OF YOUTH

If young people but divined it, nothing renders them so eharming as a beautiful deferenee to their elders. The girl who, as naturally as a flower to the sun, turns to her father and mother, antieipating their wishes and yielding her own desires in ready consent to their will, is simply irresistible. The stronger the nature the finer and sweeter it becomes if this grace of deferenee give it its final and erowning eharm.

Foreigners understand this as our Ameriean girls do not, or shall we say as American mothers often fail to do. The pretty English girl looks up to mamma for direction and aeeepts mamma's guidanee in perfect doeility until her wedding-day. The German, the Swiss, the French, the Italian girl of good family is solieitous to please her mother, and wears the graee of filial eourtesy as if it were a decoration. The manners of our young eountrywomen are less often than formerly at fault in this regard.

"How unamiable, crude, and unformed is the younger Miss Ransom," said a dignified Dutch matron to the writer in criticism of a young lady, born with the traditional silver spoon and educated in one of our best schools. "Her tone of patronage, and her supercilious air in addressing her mother, mark her as insufferably ill-bred."

Girls little know, when they snub their mothers or assert their independence of these older, wiser heads, how disagreeable an impression their conduct makes. The pert, flippant young woman in her teens or her twenties who fancies that she is sufficient in herself and scorns the advice of her mother is a jarring social note, and makes the circle around her very uncomfortable. Happily she is growing rarer than of old, and, even as Daisy Miller, is likely to be an obsolete specimen soon.

Character is often indicated by apparent trifles. The girl who brings a shawl to wrap around mother's shoulders, who slips a cushion in the precise angle to relieve a tired back, or remembers a hassock for her mother's feet, will one day make a loving wife to the man whose heart shall safely trust in her. She will do him good, and not evil, all the days of her life. For true wearing qualities, warranted to last through all stress of weather, we recommend the girl who

is the tender, thoughtful, and deferential daughter at home.

I once knew a dear girl, in years little more than a child, whose study it was to make up all the deficiencies in her mother's lot. Her father was brusque and tempestuous, but Polly always bore the brunt of his tempers, and managed to coax him into a sunny mood before her mother had time to be wounded by his petulance. A baby came, and the mother was much worn by the interruptions the little one made in her slumbers. Many a night the little crib was carried into Polly's room, and the daughter cared for the baby that her mother might rest. This mother was not very wise in some respects; she had married young, and remained in some ways rather immature till her hair was gray. Polly was of a sturdier fibre, and had New England granite in her composition, but all her courage, vigor, and resolution were tributary to her mother's aid and comfort.

As for young men, it is needless to say that nothing imparts to them such an air of distinction as devotion in word and look to their parents. Youth is ardent, impetuous, impulsive, and apt to chafe at restraint. The very qualities which enable young men to conquer the world, which make them heedless of obstacles and cause them to smile at impediments alarm-

ing to older and more cautious friends, interfere to prevent their willingness to be controlled. Yet never was there a good soldier or a good citizen who did not learn by strict discipline to rule himself and to defer to others. This lesson was to be first acquired before he was in a position to command.

Even when parents and teachers are arbitrary and unreasonable, it is the duty of young people to bear with them respectfully. In the long conflict with trouble, in the disappointments they have met, and the anxieties which they have endured, parents may have become embittered or have grown pessimistic and discouraged. Youth is the true season of optimism. We shall never be sorry, we who are young, that we have been loving and patient with the parents who were in truth a little exacting at times. When they are gone and the generation that now stands between us and eternity is no longer a breakwater against that flowing sea, we shall be glad of every kind word we ever said, of every bit of self-control we ever showed, while still the happy circle was intact.

V

MOTHER-BROODING

"JUST now I am most concerned about Louise, because she is so unhappy," said a mother, referring to a daughter who was passing through a phase of experience not uncommon in girlish life. "Of course I love Edith and Marjorie just as dearly, but Louise is not able to adjust herself to her circumstances, and I know that she is fretted and tried by some peculiarities of our home life as the other girls are not. It is easy to say that Louise ought to be contented. Very likely this is true, but the dear child is the more to be pitied that she cannot arrive at that tranquil state which others see to be her duty. So," the wise mother went on, "I am now doing my very best for Louise. I want her to be happy. Happy girls do the best work."

Far more frequently than girls imagine their mothers are looking out for them in this way. When a girl comes home from college and is tempted to feel that her years of conscientious study

and work have been thrown away, particularly if there is no immediate or direct opening in which her training can be made available, she sometimes fancies that nobody understands the position, that nobody sympathizes.

It is not true. Her mother used to be a girl, and whether or not she went to college in her day, she went to something that stood for what is college now, and when she came home she felt as her daughter feels. There is very little in the younger woman's life that the older woman does not comprehend, and though she may not always manifest her deep sympathy in the very best way, the sympathy is there.

The mother-brooding does the girl good, much more good than scolding or sermonizing would do. By-and-by the young nature will emerge from the period of struggle and unrest. It will find its appropriate vocation and discover its mission. Life will teach it patience. It will learn that conditions are changeful and circumstances temporary, but that in every place there is the chance for honest work, for true friendship, for the really divine fellowship of service.

Dear mothers, looking backward, do you not recall how wistful, how eager, how impatient of restraint you were in the days of youth? Those were not reposeful days. They were energetic, rapid, tumultuous, and often unhappy days. You have

left them behind you, and gone into a higher class. Reach down a helping hand to those who are not yet promoted to the Order of Serenity. Brood, dove-like, dear mother, over your unsatisfied girl. She needs your patient tenderness and will repay it.

VI

THE COMFORT OF STAYING AT HOME

"THERE isn't very much glory in 'biding with the stuff,' but there is solid comfort," and Aunt Ursula, having thus declared herself, took up her knitting and leaned back in her chair. Aunt Ursula is a discreet woman whose words have weight.

When we go to the steamer to see our friends off there are flowers and farewells and the happy éclat of a journey just begun, and it is as though somewhere banners were waving and drums beating "Forward, march!" We stand on the pier and watch the receding steamer till, a lessening speck, it is lost to view, and then, drying our eyes, we go home, put the kettle on, and make a cup of tea. Here enters comfort number one. It is very doubtful whether our beloved travellers, whatever pleasures they may enjoy, will taste tea with the excellent home flavor before they reach home once more. When one can control the whole process of tea-making, from the cold water, freshly drawn

and freshly boiled, not allowed to stand and simmer and evaporate and grow flat, but boiled briskly and brewed steamingly over tea carefully selected and delicately measured, one is sure of a beverage before which headaches take wings and fly away, and which is nectar and ambrosia combined. Travellers' tea is often a composition with mixed flavors, in which hay and kerosene predominate.

The person who stays at home may not, indeed, make acquaintance with novel scenes and situations, but in the added quiet and comparative freedom from care, which the lessened family circle implies, she may discover some new charms in the familiar landscape which she sees from her own door. Perhaps it is mother who has remained behind, speeding the younger people off to the outlook on the great world. Blessed mother-bird, whose brooding has made the home nest so dear and so sweet! Mother was almost endlessly busy in getting the girls ready for the trip. Anybody else would have been driven, but mother is always tranquil, let others hurry and worry as they may. Still, when the last stitch was taken and the last nail driven and the last good-by spoken, mother was tired, and there is great comfort in resting when rest has been earned.

Up-stairs, in Harry's room, there is a book which promises great entertainment, now that there is

leisure to read it, and it is the more interesting at present that it gives a well-written description of the lands which the children are visiting. In staying at home there is great satisfaction if one may also take a jaunt at will in a book not too large to be held in the hand.

One's regard for comfort need not approach the Sybarite's ideal to make one appreciative of the homely ease of one's own room and one's own bed. Seldom does the habitual stayer-at-home realize her immense advantage here over the other, who reposes now in the coffin-like couches of a steamship's cabin and again in the confined quarters of a palace-car's sleeping compartment. The stability of the home bed, the springiness, the cool, caressing touch of the spotless sheets, well folded in at the bottom of the mattress, the warmth of the soft blankets, the cleanliness so perfect and so pure, the friendliness of the pillows where you have rested in sickness and in health—all these compose a whole of comfort not to be despised.

After nights of watching by the sick, have you never gone for the night to your own room with a sense of tranquil thankfulness, hard to define but delightful to feel? The stay-at-home will certainly sleep in luxury surpassing that of the most favored pilgrim, be the pilgrimage where it may.

The sensible stayer-at-home, health and time

permitting, will find a pleasure in undertaking some bit of work for which she had not leisure while life went on in its ordinary round. It is a good idea to lay out some separate thing, something out of the ordinary, and accomplish it now. So swift is time's flight that ere ever one is aware the months will have passed and the charming duty will arrive of welcoming the dear ones back. The day of return is a red-letter day indeed.

VII

STEPMOTHERS

THE woman who assumes the office of stepmother has three sets of persons to please—her own relatives, her husband's relatives, and the relatives of her husband's former wife. Each of these sets of kinspeople, to a certain degree, sits in judgment upon this brave lady who, in the majority of instances, comes to her new and difficult position anxious to fulfil its obligations to the uttermost, and to be a good mother to the motherless children who appeal to the tenderness of her woman's nature.

Her husband's relations, with a somewhat illogical perversity, contrast her methods with those of the former Mrs. ——, are quite sure that poor John's substance is being wasted, and that the innovations of the present *régime* are enough to keep Carrie from resting in her grave, though very likely when Carrie was alive they found plenty to criticise in her. Her own relations are distressed at the burden she has undertaken, fear

that the eare of the ehildren will wear her out, and look at and speak of them as though they were little interlopers dwelling on sufferance in the house where they were born.

As for the ehildren's own relations, they ean hardly help feeling jealous and uneomfortable when they eome to the house, every nook and eorner, every carpet and eurtain, every pot and pan in whieh reminds them of the dear one, onee mistress here, now gone. These were her little ones, her Harry and Bessie and Will, and the own grandmother and aunt, in whom the sense of bereavement is still so fresh and reeent that they wonder how John ean have had time to eourt and marry another wife, wateh carefully and suspieiously every movement of the stepmother. Carrie's diseipline may have been uneertain or stormy, but it is remembered only as gentle and self-sacrificing; a hasty word, an impatient look on the part of Carrie's sueeessor is interpreted as severe if not malieious.

With the best intentions the stepmother is forever treading on thin iee. Well for her if intrusive and offieious neighbors or servants have not doubled and trebled her embarrassments and perplexities by setting the ehildren against her, pitying their hard fate, and assuring them of compassion and sympathy. Thus prepared, the little things pose to their own consciousness as

victims and martyrs, a mental attitude not without fascination to an imaginative child. Older boys square their shoulders and set their teeth, and are ready to fight if this stranger in their mother's place shall impose upon them; while their sisters, at the delicate and impressionable age of twelve or thirteen, are sullen and contrary, refusing to be conciliated by any overtures the new mother may make.

Beyond the circle of those immediately concerned the whole world, as represented in song and story in the literature of every nation, sets its battle in array against the stepmother. Each woman, therefore, who takes upon herself the duties of this condition must conquer her world anew. That the common feeling and common talk on the subject are manifestly unjust alters no feature of the case. I repeat, she is a brave woman who marries a man to whose children she must become a mother with everything that motherhood implies, for in the majority of instances this is precisely what she does. Loving the children for the sake of their father she adopts them into her very heart.

Sometimes she is aware of a double sacredness in this vicarious motherhood of hers, feeling that in very deed she has undertaken work laid down by one who is in heaven, and who there has not forgotten the children she left on earth. The

thought of this mother invests the children with a dignity in the eyes of the stepmother. Her own children, when she shall have them, will bring with them an entirely different sort of responsibility.

"I felt so left out," said a devoted stepmother to me, "when at little Amy's funeral the minister prayed for her father, her brothers and sisters, and for everybody but me."

Evidently the good man had not imagined the stepmother in need of sympathy, yet she it was who had nursed the lost darling through the days and nights of fever, to whom the little one had turned in the intervals of delirium, and who had been a true mother to the last hour of the little life.

Said again a stepmother: "I shall never know a moment of purer ecstasy than that which I felt when our great sixteen-year-old boy, of his own accord, first called me mother. He came in from school, stood on the stairs and called me. I could hardly speak for joy."

I do not hesitate to say that I have often seen illustrated in the conduct of the stepmother an unsurpassed heroism of patience, fortitude, and courage little short of sublime. There are mothers and mothers. A woman may bear children and bring them up after a fashion, and yet be singularly lacking in the elements which compose

true maternity. It is possible that a stepmother may understand child-training, and may love children more fully than the mother who called them her own.

VIII

ONE VIEW OF THE MAID

THE "hired girl" or "help" or "domestic" or "maid," call her by what name we prefer, is a very important factor in the life of the home which employs her services. Sometimes we overlook, in the contemplation of her shortcomings, the monotony and drudgery of her existence, which, brighten it as we may strive to, or intensify it as we may, on the other hand, by our lack of consideration, is, it must be admitted, narrow and hard enough. No class of working women grow old so rapidly as the women who live in our kitchens, eating good food, sleeping comfortably, and partaking of our abundance.

It is pathetic to see the roses fade in the cheeks of a young Irish peasant, the hollows deepen under her eyes, the hard lines creep about her mouth, after a few years of life over a cooking-stove, of polishing, scrubbing, washing, and ironing. Bridget has her numerous defects. She is a great trial to one's patience, a means of dis-

cipline to her mistress in many ways, but she is warm-hearted, loving, and faithful, and she repays when she receives it the sort of care for her health, her associations, and her happiness that we freely bestow on our daughters.

In a large boarding-house in New York, one summer Sunday morning, a message was hurriedly sent from the kitchen to the mistress. It was an urgent and alarming message. The mistress descended in haste from her chamber to find her cook gasping for breath, a maid fanning her, another standing with a glass of water.

"Oh, Miss Agnes!" exclaimed the woman, "I think I'm dying! *Who'll get the breakfast?*"

The words were hardly spoken when she was "away," as the Scotch so graphically call the going forth of the soul. Up-stairs the unconscious boarders, eighty of them, were awaking from their Sunday morning naps or leisurely dressing, and down-stairs, among her pots and pans, in the kitchen where she had borne the sceptre for eleven faithful years, the cook had put on the majesty of immortality.

"Who'll get the breakfast?" Her last earthly thought of duty, of responsibility, was as brave and rang as true as ever the dying word of soldier on a hard-fought battle-field.

"I had lived in the house for ten years, and had seen Ellen but once in that time," was the

comment of a lady as she repeated these pathetic last words; "but," she added, "I never knew housekeeping to move with so little friction. Whoever went or came, the cook stood at her post, like the unseen pivot which regulates the machinery."

A matron must not write herself down a failure because, at certain domestic crises or in an occasional period of change and upheaval, she has trouble in adjusting satisfactorily the relation of the maid-servant to the family. One of the best housekeepers, and one, also, of the sweetest women I have ever known, had fourteen cooks in succession one winter. Going abroad for her summer's outing, her sister said: "G—— is on the verge of nervous prostration, all through the unaccountable difficulty she had in finding or keeping a cook. It was perfectly surprising and has used her up, but we all know that it was phenomenal and not likely to happen again!"

In engaging a maid the mistress is sometimes antagonized by the questions, apparently impertinent, of the former—apparently so, often, when there is in reality no impertinent intention.

"Do you live in a pretty house? Are the rooms nice?" innocently inquired a young girl of the lady who was about engaging her as maid-of-all-work.

"I dismissed all thought of *her* on the spot," said the lady. "Her question was pert, and indicated a tendency to over-familiarity."

Another woman, less easily daunted, engaged this girl, and found, after months of great comfort, that she had a real treasure of diligence, docility, and faithfulness. And, when one thinks about it, why shouldn't the maid, the party of the second part, in a strictly commercial transaction, desire to know whether or not she is to live "in a pretty house, with nice rooms?" *Why* not?

IX

THE NEED OF EXPRESSION

THERE is a patient little woman away in a corner of our Western land who waited twenty-five years for her wedding-ring. Twenty-five toiling years, filled to the brim with hardship, with denial, with privation, but sweet beyond expression nevertheless, with wifely devotion, with the love of a loyal husband, and the presence in the home of happy, healthful children. At last the patient woman found herself facing her silver wedding-day, older, thinner, sallower than when she slipped her trusting hand into that of her lover, pledging him her lifelong faith, but contented and thankful, and assured that along the way she had come the Lord had led her.

"Think," she wrote to me, "of a woman's waiting so long for her wedding-ring! But when we were married we were too poor to spare the money for one. It was, indeed, all for love, and the world well lost! You may imagine my de-

light when my dear husband surprised me with my ring !"

Other and beautiful gifts there were to crown this blissful anniversary—gifts from the son who had gone away to make his fortune, carrying with him the principles taught at his mother's knee in the plain, God-fearing household; love gifts from friends who had known and honored the pair, but perhaps the best and dearest of all is one which has been developing itself silently and slowly, amid the pressure of poverty and the limitations of a hard-working life, in a remote neighborhood where life has of necessity been strenuous. This gift has been hers all along, but she has had no time to discover it.

The need of expression, amid many trials, has wrought in this woman until it has resulted in the ability to write acceptably on certain themes —not ambitiously, indeed, but acceptably, with directness and force. She finds real happiness in using her pen, and in many ways is able to give pleasure to others. The little poem addressed to a neighbor or a relative finds great favor in affection's partial eyes, and is as welcome as a bouquet of hothouse flowers, sent where flowers are few to a lover of bloom and fragrance. In many directions the simplicity and sweetness of this woman's nature are becoming helpful, because her need of expression has forced her to find an outlet.

All over the country there are women leading patient, uneventful lives which might be wonderfully brightened if they could find relief from drudgery in some pleasant pursuit not belonging to the household's monotonous round. The very general interest in china painting, and in other forms of decorative art, has uplifted many a life and set it free from depressing dullness. High art may be shocked at some of the attempts at beauty's reproduction which afford such pleasure to the innocent mothers and daughters who finish and frame them, yet the need of expression is legitimate and healthful. The crazy-quilt, following the patchwork *chefs-d'œuvre* of an earlier generation, marked an advancing tide, and the constantly improving taste of each decade shows that the work is not stationary. It is constantly progressing.

Do not let anybody discourage you in indulging a fancy for some pretty accomplishment. If you love flowers and wish to cultivate them, and if you like botany and desire to study it, let nobody persuade you that you are wasting your time. You are not wasting it. You are employing it to the best advantage. If you are fond of any line of study, pursue it doggedly, though you can give but ten minutes a day to the text-book. There lies your need of expression, and it is your duty to gratify it. Duty may be owed

by a woman to herself quite as much as to her husband and her children.

Never fancy that your day is over. I met a matron, her hair silvered with the snows of seventy winters, and I said, "How sweet and bright and *young* she is!" "Yes," said my friend, "she is valiantly attacking Hebrew, in these days of her leisure, and finds great enjoyment in storming that fortress!"

A woman is never too old to find expression for her soul in some occupation or endeavor which can bring her happiness. The richer one is in herself the more will she have to bestow, wherever her lot may be cast.

X

THE MOTHER WHO IS CROWDED OUT

"AFTER a mother is fifty years old there is no longer any room for her in the world, and she ought to die." The words were bitter, but they were not bitterly spoken. Rather, the intonations of the patient voice were plaintive, and the care-lined face of the elderly woman who uttered the sentiment wore no look of protest. Instead, there was in it an expression of resignation, of acquiescence in something which must be accepted and endured.

Thinking of the many aged mothers loved to idolatry by the men and women who are their "bairns" still, albeit some of them have silver hair and bent shoulders, thinking of the *middle-aged*, who bear as unquestioned a sceptre as when their babies were in the nursery, though these are now "young people" with the hopes and aspirations and work of the young, I wondered whether my friend were not a solitary sufferer. Observation has convinced me to the contrary,

and it is my conviction that somebody should uplift a note of warning in the ears of thoughtless, not heartless, daughters.

"The wind is in the east this morning," said a girl at the breakfast-table, with a significant glance around at her brothers and sisters, and a little pucker of the mouth in the direction of the matron whose hand trembled a little as she poured out the coffee.

"Your mother is very tired and evidently not well," ventured an acquaintance, later, when "mother's irritability" was freely discussed in her hearing by these young people.

"That may be," said one of them, lightly, "but she needn't be so cross. We are all willing to do our share in helping her, but *she doesn't know that the world has moved since her day.*"

Neither did the young daughter realize that, however far the world may have moved since the mother's "day," it never has moved, and never will, from the shadow of the Fifth Commandment. I have a standing quarrel, too, with the statement that a person's "day" is pre-eminently her day of youth. There is a "day" for forty, for sixty, for eighty, and each "day" is as important and as honorable, if well spent, as the other—the later as gloryful as the earlier. There is one beauty of the rosebuds, and another beauty

of the ripened wheat, and another again of the snowflakes.

But, of course, I know what girls mean when they talk of older people who have had their day. And I am always greatly perplexed and troubled if I see that the effect of education, in a wider sense than the mother knew, has been to make the younger look down upon, or patronize, the elder woman. The plain mother has made sacrifices, some of them very heavy, to obtain for her children the opportunities and advantages of the best schools. She has toiled early and late, spent lonely hours, felt in her soul at times a humiliating depression because she could not keep pace with her children, and it is simply unspeakably low and mean for her daughters ever to snub her, or to be impatient with her, or to manœuvre to keep her in the background.

Girls, you cannot be too tender of your mothers in the every-day round. Do not suffer them to be crowded out.

XI

SOCIETY GIRLS

THE judgment of those who look only upon the surface is apt to be sweeping, and is sometimes unfair to the society girl. We use the term in its accepted, conventional meaning, referring here to the girl who either in her own life or through the kindness of wealthy parents has her time at her own disposal, may come and go as she pleases, and enjoy the pleasures of independence.

Kitty at the farm-house washing dishes, straining the milk, and saving her pence all summer to buy her simple autumn finery, regards the lavish expenditure of the girl whom she has known only as the luxurious summer boarder with a feeling that is half surprise, half censure, and now and then wholly envy. The girl behind the counter and the girl in the factory gaze with admiration on this brilliant creature whose gowns are miracles of fit and finish, whose gloves cost more in a season than they can earn in a year,

and often there steals into their hearts a chilly resentment against that Providence which has made her life so easy and their lives so hard.

"I could be lovely," said a young girl one day, "if I were placed as Miss Mary is, in a beautiful home, with a carriage to ride in, servants to wait on me, and a mother to spend her time in devising plans for my pleasure. I love music and art and all refined enjoyments as much as she does, but I have no time to look at pictures, no money to spend on concerts, and am condemned to toil like a slave for the mere necessaries of existence. There are moments when I am so weary that I hate God and don't want to be good. Why could not God have made things evener, given me a little more and her a little less?"

Common as this way of looking at it may be, lying as it does at the root of much of the seething discontent of our day, it is based upon an utter mistake. None of us should measure our conditions and circumstances by a glance at those who are more favorably placed than ourselves, but, on the contrary, by comparison with those who are less happily and less richly endowed. Always there is somebody beneath us to whom our lot appears exceedingly fortunate, and who would be glad to accept our limitations if our good things could accompany them. The Lord,

who has a plan for every life, appoints to each of us the sphere and the opportunity best fitted for our development.

It is also unfair to the society girl to underrate her temptations and deny her deserved credit for her triumphs. Little as the other understands it, the rich girl has her own pitfalls. No one has more allurements to the indulgence of selfish ease than she whose path has been always smooth. In fact, however, we need not go beyond the circle of society girls to find fair and sweet examples of Christian living.

An incident may illustrate my meaning. There was a story of poverty common enough. A father out of work, a mother keeping a little shop, a mortgage, a child dead, another dying —heavy were the clouds and dark the portents brooding over a little home. In a roundabout way the tale of calamity, past and present, reached the ear of a girl who wore the purple ribbon and silver cross of the King's Daughters. She interested her Ten, visits and inquiries were made, the young ladies went to the city missionary and the charity commissioners to investigate the case, and discovering it to be one of real need, they set the little family on its feet, sending the mother and baby to the country, engaging some one to attend the shop, and never resting till they found employment for the father. Every girl in the

Ten belonged to the class known as society girls.

So far from wasting their time in a desperate attempt to keep up with the fashions, many of these girls use their leisure in pursuing lines of advanced study, fitting themselves to be congenial wives for educated men, and for mothering the next generation. Earnest, cultivated, and gently bred, such girls give tone to a community, gather in clubs to study and discuss subjects worth considering, and belong to that order which in America constitutes the true nobility.

XII

A CHILD'S SAVINGS-BANK

"You see," said the little mother, with great complacency, "we are early beginning to teach Freddie to save his pennies. Here is his bank, the cleverest contrivance you ever saw. You drop the penny on the dog's paw, the dog opens his mouth and wags his tail, and the money drops through this tiny slit into a receptacle below, while the watch-dog remains on guard. Mr. G. and I have determined to guide our children from the first in ways of economy, for we agree in our contempt of a spendthrift. Freddie already takes satisfaction in feeling the increasing *heftiness* of his cute little bank."

The situation awakened reflections as I listened, and I wondered very much whether the young parents, having been impressed with a partial view of an excellent thing in character, were not, after all, making a mistake in the bent they were giving their golden-haired boy.

Thrift *is* a praiseworthy virtue. It is a sturdy

plant, flourishing and flowering in soils which refuse rootage to weaker growths. To be thrifty is to be self-denying, to be frugal, to work steadily towards an ultimate goal, to be honest in one's dealings, to lay up for the rainy day. The thrifty family are provident and forehanded. They have assets, resources. They build up a reputation for solveney and their record ehallenges investigation.

But the more I consider the matter the more it comes home to me that thrift is only praiseworthy as its exercise affords opportunity for a still higher virtue to flourish, as it prepares the way for generosity. The liberal soul sees farther, builds better, and does more good in the world than the merely thrifty soul. To save that one may give is noble. To give systematically while one saves is noble. To be self-denying to one's own ease, one's own indulgence, one's own rash impulses, and thus to have it in one's power to bestow without grudging and with lavish hand, is to live according to a grand ideal.

I would have the child's savings-bank by all means, and I would encourage the child to put by his pennies ; but it should be that his little hand might have it in its power by-and-by to put a pair of shoes on another child's little naked feet, or to help send a missionary-box to a Sunday-school on the frontier. Our children lose an

important part of education because our methods of giving are so often slipshod and spasmodic —not, in fact, methods, but sporadic impulses.

The child's giving should be his own, and to this end every child should have something belonging to him and under his individual control, of and from which his gifts should be taken. As soon as the little boy or girl is old enough, and that is very early in life, the savings-bank ought to be supplemented by the weekly allowance. Let this be regularly given to the child and the child taught to administer it wisely. As years come and go the youthful income will naturally be increased, and its owner, taught to save and to spend with discretion, will be prepared in a measure for one of the great obligations of life.

No child should be taught to hoard. If a parent observe in a child the dawning of a tendency to the niggard clutch upon toys, candies, or pennies, which is a straw to indicate future stinginess, he or she should at once take measures to correct this evil. A miser and a spendthrift are equally despicable in Divine and human eyes.

Money is responsibility. "Give an account of thy stewardship" will be said, is indeed being now said, day by day, to every one of us. The little savings-bank is chiefly valuable as it furnishes a stepping-stone towards the formation

of right principles in the use of that with which our Father has intrusted us.

I knew a dear old lady in a rural part of New England, a woman keenly intellectual but with the spirit of a child. Her means had never been large, and she had saved in many a small way, to the amusement of town-bred kindred, who scoffed at the using of a match twice and the careful looking after crumbs. But when a collection was taken for the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions her contribution far exceeded that of richer people, and when a church was to be erected in her township her name was put down for $500, a truly queenly gift in her circumstances. Frugality with her was the handmaid of liberality.

XIII

THE KEEPING OF DIARIES AND ACCOUNTS

In the early part of a new year many people feel an impulse towards living with greater precision than formerly. It is quite natural to make good resolutions of various kinds when the new start on the calendar, the new leaf turned over in the book of time, gives the suggestion and the opportunity. And the making of resolutions is not at all a bad thing. Even if they are not kept as strenuously as they are made, yet, when prompted by a quickening of conscience and a desire for improvement, they do give us a forward impulse, and we are the better for that; the pace for a while is less languid, the goal is more certainly in view.

In common with a thousand other women, I love to handle and possess one of those little red-covered volumes which at the head of each white page presents a day and a date for the whole round year. I have sometimes for several consecutive years kept my regular daily record of

happenings, of visits made and received, of texts and sermons heard with profit, of expenses for household and personal needs, of money given to charity or set to the account of religious work. I can testify, therefore, to the extreme satisfaction which is the legitimate result of such a diary persistently and accurately kept. It gives one in outline a family record or the story of an individual year, memory easily supplying details when the main facts are jotted down in the order and at the time of their occurrence.

In a large family, where all are busy in their several ways, one son or one daughter might be constituted the family secretary, his or her duty being to write the story of each day before retiring at night. Though, happily, in every household there are long and uneventful periods when nothing out of the common stirs the heart to alarm or excites apprehension, still in the gentle flow of family life enough will always be found to make such a history full of interest to those most intimately concerned.

In a family of which I have knowledge one of the parents has kept such a record as I am describing for twenty-five years, writing it day by day. The little book slips into his pocket when travelling, and he jots the brief record down with his stylographic pen while the cars are whirled along, and at home it lies on his desk just at his

hand, as much in sight as the Bible that is his daily companion. Sometimes at the table, or in conversation with friends, it is desirable to recall definitely something that took place a dozen years ago. Father simply looks in the little book covering the year under consideration and the written record settles the matter.

So much goes on in the story of a family—white-letter days of birth, betrothal, and bridal; red-letter days of feast and festival; darkened days of pain and sorrow, brightened and soothed by Heaven's own peace—it is worth while to set their record down in a somewhat permanent form. As for the keeping of accounts, most of us know only too well that our expenditures need the wholesome check of careful scrutiny. We know, also, that our benefactions are too sporadic, too much arranged as if by accidental or incidental impulses. A wise economy dictates our careful balancing of outgo against income, and our giving to missions at home and abroad, to the poor among us, and to all who have a claim on us as our Lord's representative, according to rule and not according to caprice. A consecrated account-book in every Christian household would multiply the gifts to the Lord's treasury ten to one hundred fold.

XIV

A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

Blessings in disguise are apt to come to us wearing grave and frowning faces, and we meet them with averted eyes and hands trembling. It is because we do not know how precious they are, and with what tender and fragrant sweetness they are fraught that we turn away, finding later how divine was their ministry and how beautiful their meaning. Once and again during our pilgrimage these messengers cross our path, but we seldom recognize them until they have done their errands and gone—those errands sometimes half frustrated by our perverse and blind reception, or conception, of what God intended by this or that special providential dealing.

You are, for instance, full of plans for a certain period of time and exceedingly busy, so busy that you are sure you cannot spare a moment for a single interruption. Nor, by the utmost effort, can you crowd in another engagement. Every waking moment is occupied, and the

thronging duties and anxieties of the day invade the night so that your sleep is broken and disturbed. Now, at precisely the most inconvenient hour of your life, as it seems to your thought, there comes the intrusion of a fit of illness. You resent the pain, the nervous weariness, the time you must spend and waste in bed, and you beg the physician to give you a tonic which will do its work quickly and efficaciously and set you again on your feet. Very likely you say, in that incipient stage of illness which is simply solicitous and irritating: "I have no time to be ill, doctor. I must have my hands free for my work."

The doctor smiles and drops a soothing word. His tones are encouraging, and you do not notice that he makes you no pledges and that he is chary of promises. You resign yourself to wait until time and rest and remedies shall have had their beneficial influence upon you, and then, you hardly know how it happens, all thought of the neglected tasks drifts away from you, and you lie still and are tranquil, and others take up your duties and carry out your plans, and the world goes on.

The world would go on if you were taken out of it, for, though the workers drop out of the ranks, the work itself never stops. No one of us is essential in any place, and it is well for us

occasionally to enter into a realization of this fact, which, commonplace as it is in the utterance, is still far from being fully accepted by our understanding.

Gradually health returns, and with it a new poise, a new freshness, a new youthfulness of feeling. The first walk, the first drive, after an illness, how eventful they appear, and how delightful! We did not remember that the view around the familiar turn in the road was so entrancing; we are surprised at the beauty of the roses in our neighbor's garden; the young girls in the village never looked so charming before, and we wonder if it is that the quaintly picturesque costumes just now in vogue are more becoming than any dress ever worn by youthful girlhood before. What is the secret?

Presently we discover that we are ourselves rested. Those days in bed were doing for us what nothing else could have done; they were giving to every organ of the body and to every faculty of the soul a chance to stop the exertion which was wearing the machinery out. We have been, so to speak, in the dry-dock for repairs, and the illness we repined at was a blessing in disguise.

Could we but see it, there are other and familiar experiences which bear the same character. The stupid and clumsy maid, who taxes your

patience and ingenuity to make up for her blunders and to remedy her accidents, is developing in you sweetness, gentleness, and tact. The obdurate pupil, who is wilful and headstrong, and apparently incapable of attending to lessons with any heedful interest, is bringing out in you those qualities of energy, of magnetism, of versatility, which will enable you hereafter to control classes of such boys and influence them for their unending advantage. A little thought will show to many of us how full of good and rich in abiding helpfulness are our blessings in disguise.

XV

CONCERNING INTERRUPTIONS

It is probable that interruptions are intended by our Heavenly Father to be part of our educational course in this room of His universe, else they would not so persistently intrude upon our busiest days. One may test her growth in grace by the spirit in which she receives and accepts interruptions, by the use she makes of them, by the help or the hindrance they prove in her day's work.

Many of us, laying out the plan of our week's engagements on Monday, resolve to accomplish a certain amount by Saturday. We are exceptional if the amount be not a large one, taxing to the full our powers of mind and body. Few of us are contented to drift inactive and inert on the stream of time; we are driven by a force which impels us to action, as the engine is moved by the steam which sets its wheels revolving. It might be well if we could sometimes be less intense, if occasionally the grace of tranquillity were ours in larger measure.

Most of us, however, have plenty to do which must be done by somebody. If we shirk or are self-indulgent, others will have to undertake an undue proportion of labor. The housemother cannot drop her tasks into other hands, can at best only delegate some and share others. But how eagerly she longs at times for a long, clear morning, with no breaks, no *needless* worries, no fretting, harassing bits interjected into the stream which might move on so calmly were it let alone. She has a sister in a distant State, and it is impressed upon her that she ought to write a long, gossipy letter to this absent one, telling her the family news, reaching to her the clasp of kinship, letting her know that she is still spoken and thought of in the old home and important yet in the family counsels. By much planning and managing the busy matron of whom we are speaking secures a space of time, a margin so to speak, which she can devote to this pleasant duty, but just as pen, ink, and paper are before her a friendly visitor runs in, ostensibly to ask a question, really to spend an idle half-hour. The visitor is perhaps agreeable and, it may be, entertaining, but she has played the part of the fretting moth.

This interruption is followed by another and legitimate one—an outcry from the door in front of the house. Tommy has hurt his hand badly

with a knife that somehow slipped when he was whittling, and mother must bind it up. Then, of all the days in the year, her good man comes home early to-day and looks for entertainment; her letter must be postponed till a more convenient season.

But there is another side. Not long ago a woman who has done much excellent work in literature, and who has been a blessing to her generation, said, cheerfully: "Perhaps I would never have accomplished anything if I had not had so much to contend with. My books have been written bit by bit through incessant interruptions; my poems have been built line by line over the kneading-board. I have taught my boy Latin and thought out my articles at the same time." In this case the woman had learned the rare art of dominating interruptions. Her concentration had become a habit. She was not easily disconcerted by the intrusion of a call, or a visit, or a round of housework in the morning, or the beating of a cake, or throwing together of a batch of biscuits. From first to last she was mistress of herself, and able to gather up the fragments of her day and make of them a sphere.

Few of us are able to secure the undisturbed leisure we would like for reading the Bible and prayer. In one or another form "the world is too much with us, late and soon." We have to

gather the manna day by day, a little at a time, and, though we enter into our closets, we are often compelled to leave them before we have had the restful communion for which we yearn. In view of the crowding interruptions which hinder our spiritual progress, it is well to form the habit of ejaculatory prayer — the swift, brief heart's cry to God for help and refreshment at the moment. Never does such a cry wing itself to the throne and receive no answer. "As thy day thy strength shall be," and in every "Oh, my Father!" waits the answer, "Here, My child."

Above all things, let us not fret at our interruptions, nor suffer them to bring to our brows the frown of annoyance, to our lips the impatient word. Better use them as tools to shape our lives; better receive them as gifts which shall presently enrich us.

XVI

SUNDAY READING

One bright summer Sabbath afternoon a busy clergyman in a certain city found it necessary to make a pastoral call upon a distant parishioner who was ill, availing himself for the purpose of a line of horse-cars, which are never so crowded as on the Lord's Day, since their objective points are respectively a ferry and a beautiful park. While waiting for a car upon the street corner he observed a lady, young, tastefully dressed, and of remarkable grace of movement and loveliness of face, who, like himself, had an errand upon the line of the road. Was she going, a very spirit of spring, of sunshine, and of song, to some bedside of suffering? or had she been sitting, the centre of a happy, interested circle, telling dear little children about the Saviour who came to be their best and strongest Friend? or was she the delight and darling of some household which waited impatiently for her return? The clergyman, with daughters of his

own about the same age, observed the pure Madonna face, the stately bearing, and the book, in an embroidered cover, in the faultlessly gloved hand; and then, as both passengers found adjacent seats in a car, his eye fell on the open page in which the girl was presently completely absorbed, and its title at the head revealed the book to be a sensational novel by a second-rate author—a dangerous book for a girl's reading on even a week-day! There came a revulsion of feeling in the mind of the minister; and the young woman, whose Sunday reading in a public place openly proclaimed her to be a careless keeper of the Sabbath, and a person lacking in mental culture as well, fell several degrees in the estimation of the kind observer, who had fancied her one of our every-day saints.

A great change has come over the feeling and modified the conduct of many professors of religion since the period of my girlhood. Then few thoughtful church members pursued their secular reading on the Sabbath. A broad line of distinction as to the books and papers proper to the hallowed day and customary to week-days ran through family life. Where now one finds the young people openly reading the monthly magazines, the current novels, the latest books of travel, or essays in criticism, then the absence of these was the rule, and the reading was of a

kind not always profoundly interesting, perhaps, but calculated to elevate the soul above things secular and to deepen spirituality.

Whatever the reasons, and they are doubtless complex, the tone of thought, and the general practice, have undergone modification during the last quarter-century. Less than that time has elapsed since a young man, a college graduate and a social leader, was spending a vacation month in the Adirondacks, and one Sabbath morning, under the shadow of the pines, was discovered by a friend buried in a book to the exclusion of outside interests for the time.

"Why, my dear Will, you are not reading a novel, are you?" was the inquiry.

The man looked brightly up, with the frank eyes and confident manner of his twenty-one years. "I'm not a model, doctor, by any means, and I don't set myself up for one, but I'm not quite so bad a fellow as that."

The answer showed, like a demonstration in mathematics, what the home training had been here — a training that some might denominate narrow and Puritanical, but which formed character on grand lines and gave a strength and stability which *held*. More of this same Puritanical training in these days might make business honor a safer quantity, and keep young men from perilous tampering with the temptations which

allure them on every side in our exciting and hurrying life.

I think, however, that I hear a reader ask, with a practical intent, for suggestions as to appropriate Sunday reading, and in the hope of being helpful, I will indicate some good authors and good books who and which are easily accessible, and sure to be interesting as well as profitable.

I do not here recommend the Bible, though no other book is so fascinating when properly approached, because the Bible is Monday's book and Saturday's book as well as Sunday's fittest companion. A copy of that classic, "The Land and the Book," is a good investment for the family library, and with its lavish illustrations and choice information is pleasing to all young people, and to older ones who go to Sunday-school—an expensive book, but one which lasts a lifetime or several lifetimes. This is worth having. Lately I have derived great pleasure from a book entitled "Christ in the Old Testament; or, The Great Argument," also by Dr. Thomson, a son of the former author; and, though the name has a theological sound, the book itself is popular in style and of simply wonderful charm. "God in His World," by Henry Mills Alden, is another very suggestive book, of a somewhat mystical type which thoughtful

people will enjoy. "The Still Hour," by Professor Phelps, never wears out, but may be read again and again. The sermons of F. W. Robertson or of Phillips Brooks are delightful Sunday afternoon reading.

In the line of biography the range is very wide. The lives of Bishop Hannington and of Rev. John G. Paton surpass in vivid personal interest and dramatic force anything recently published; but from Judson onward it is to the memoirs of the foreign missionary that we must turn if we would read of heroes and martyrs of whom the world was not worthy, being stirred to enthusiasm as we read. "Memorials of a Quiet Life" and "The Life of the Baroness Bunsen" retain their place upon my own shelves as ever fresh, and to be read over and over on Sunday afternoons.

"The Schonberg-Cotta Chronicles" and the sueeeeding books from the pen of Mrs. Charles, and nearly all the books of Miss C. M. Yonge, are good reading for young people, and their high religious ideal and pure tone and atmosphere lift them to the Lord's Day height.

How long is it, may I ask, since you last read the "Pilgrim's Progress." A dozen years, did you say? Then pardon me if I remind you that the immortal book may be read through onee every year without losing an atom of its mag-

netic charm. Possibly you have never read it, if you belong to my younger set of friends—matrons whose girlish time was taken up by the engrossing demands of the higher feminine education. If so, you have yet a great pleasure before you. I am sorry your childhood missed the dearest of human books, but don't defer making Bunyan's acquaintance one hour longer than you can help.

XVII

A QUESTION OF HARMONY

OVER and over again the question is asked by busy women—farmers' wives, whose days are full of care, women with small incomes in towns where they constantly meet socially (as why should they not?) women with large means—"How shall we harmonize the needful daily drudgery with the development which we crave? Where are we to find the time to keep up our reading? Who will do our sewing while we attend the literary society? How are we to keep pace with our children?"

The last inquiry is the most touching and most earnest of all. It is no slight thing for a middle-aged mother, worn and spent by a life of almost incessant toil, to see her daughters drifting away from her, partly because of the very advantages which they owe to her loving self-denial.

I think that we may safely assert that duties, real duties, never conflict. The mother must ascertain just how much of *her* daily work is a

duty, and then she must ask herself whether duty to her family does not demand that their mother shall be saved to them. It does not greatly help the woman I have in mind to advise her to hire a servant, for she has so long done her work, or the most of it, that a servant would be in her way. She would hardly know how to direct a woman not her sister or her daughter. She would feel a strange diffidence in ordering her, and, at bottom, is reluctant to have an alien element in her clean, spotless kitchen. This may be foolish and unreasonable, yet it nevertheless is true of the good woman of my thought. She prefers to do her work herself.

She also does not need the often repeated injunction to make up plain clothes for her children, and dispense with superfluous ruffling and tucking. For some years she has left the tucking and braiding to her girls, and her share of the family sewing has been largely the care of the mending-basket. She is not quite so strong as she used to be. Her step is less active. She often has headaches, and her back—why, there is a gnawing pain there which compels her to "waste time lying down," much often against her will.

Now, how shall this mother harmonize those chords in her life which do not precisely vibrate to melody? Shall she repress the cry of her

famished intellect and suffer her old book knowledge, a foundational knowledge once highly prized, to pass altogether from her memory? Shall she give up or shall she go on? Chautauqua has answered this question helpfully for some. Among the women whom Chautauqua enrolls in her several classes are many such—women who have learned to long for some life beyond the drudging routine of mere domesticity, though heart and soul and body they are women who belong to the home, and who are not willing to have any existence separate from the household. But there are women too busy, too timid, too untrained, and too self-denying to take a Chautauqua course. It is beyond them. The lost habit of attention to study cannot be regained, and, if it could, they cannot spare the necessary time for continuous and thoughtful reading. What shall these do?

Their case is by no means a desperate one. In the first place, every woman who belongs to this particular class, whether in town or in country, should intelligently consider her own needs. She should exact assistance from her family. It may be pleasanter to *her* to let Minnie spend a whole morning in piano practice while Minnie's mother does the baking, but there is a manifest injustice in having any work unequally divided, and Minnie's character will be

more symmetrically developed, her future usefulness and peace of mind will be more assured, if she practise less and help mother more. Daughters are often censured for thoughtless indifference to the comfort of mothers when only the mothers are in fault, for *they* insist on taking and holding the laboring oar, and they keep the daughters in ignorance of the relief the latter could give and be. The type of woman we are studying is especially blameworthy here.

Next, this mother with the brain less quickly responsive than of old to anything which taxes it may find it a pleasant and profitable exercise to do this very simple thing—viz., to sit down beside her youngest child and help her study her lessons. No matter how easy they are the mother will not find them beneath her, for our juvenile text-books are in these days the work of the best and most enthusiastic teachers in our country. The child will take hold with a new interest, now that mother is helping her so grandly, and the break made in the usual routine, the effort to secure a half-hour or an hour every day for such an end, will rest and refresh and renew the older student in a marvellous manner.

If the mother does not care for reading and cannot arouse herself to interest in a book, even in such a book as "John Halifax, Gentleman," let her not think herself beyond the pale of clever

and bright womanhood. Books are not everybody's tools. The fields before the door contain plants and herbs which she has always liked for their color and perfume, and, involuntarily, in her walks she has gathered sheaves of these fragrances and brought them home. No woman who loves a flower is too old to study botany, and some of the best botanists I have known have been farmers' wives, unlearned in other directions, but able to classify the flora around their homes, and persistent students of Nature in her various moods. "Do you know," said a country neighbor to me the other day, as I strolled along a lane near my temporary summer home—"do you know that on yonder hill I have found fifty varieties of ferns alone?"

A woman may not care for a story or an essay, but she may be delighted with a microscope, or she may enjoy working with a hammer and plane and making things as men do. Whatever pursuit, outside of daily housework, a woman can enjoy will go far to keeping her abreast of her active young people, and to conserve her own youthfulness of spirit.

Lastly, dear mother, do not be over-anxious. Do your best, and leave the rest in the care of the Heavenly Father. Harmony and grace never grow by fretting. To serve is woman's work, but she must not be cumbered with service.

XVIII

SUMMER CHURCH-GOING

Away from home and our own particular church there is apt to be a little letting down the bars of habit. We take to ourselves a degree of freedom, and perhaps by a certain train of reasoning, not far removed from sophistry, convince our minds that we may worship God as well in our rooms, or on a veranda with our books, as by attendance at church. With inclination to fortify argument, one may bring herself to believe almost anything.

Yet the obligation to spend the Sabbath strictly as conscience and custom dictate is not removed by absence from the town and the church where we are known to everybody. There our example would not tell upon others as it does in a strange place, among people unfamiliar, and possibly willing by following in our steps to excuse themselves from a lapse which they cannot justify. One quiet and refined family setting the fashion in a rural resort may lead a crowd of

summer pleasure-seekers to attend the local churches on the Lord's Day, and the midweek meeting as well, so influential for the right are object-lessons.

A lady who opened her charming mountain home to summer boarders was very much impressed by the fact that while applicants wrote to her inquiring about the table, the rooms, the shade, the chances for fishing and driving, and other amusements, the water in the well, the freedom from malaria, and everything that had to do with their physical comfort, no one asked about church privileges. It was significant to her — the thought of the comparatively small part this special advantage for spiritual growth played in the eyes of persons temporarily leaving home.

Wearied as some of us are by the pressure of church work during nine months of the year, the wish for a vacation is natural and reasonable. But one may drop the responsibilities which burden her at home without also surrendering the right to privileges. In the country church one is often divinely fed. Some of the most thoughtful and richly suggestive sermons I have ever heard I have listened to in country pulpits, and they live in memory still, marked as red-letter days, those Sabbaths of the soul, when the message from above came to me through

the lips of messengers whose names were unknown to me as they spoke. The finest of the wheat is what God gives his people when they carry their religion, to use a common phrase, wherever they go.

We need to remind ourselves that in this period of luxurious and æsthetic living one cannot always and everywhere be comfortable. One may have stairs to climb to an audience-room, cold in winter and hot in summer, yet be repaid by a reward worth seeking, in eloquent and scholarly preaching, in a spirituality which elevates and inspires. Soon after the Civil War a little band of people in West Virginia found themselves worshipping in a primitive school-house, with rough planks, backless, for seats, the green turf under their feet, and chinks in walls and roof letting in air and sky. "Never," wrote a friend, "have I been nearer to God than in that dear, rude little church; never heard finer congregational praise, nor more fervent prayer, nor better preaching."

Wherever we are the obligation is to let our light shine. Shall we not do as we would at home, when home is behind us and our tent pitched temporarily by the beach or among the hills? And as for our mental attitude and our spoken criticism, shall we not try to hold in abeyance that which is censorious in word and

thought, and try to find only that which we approve and admire?

Candid reflection will make it apparent to most of us that our most profitable summer Sabbaths have not been those of desultory reading or of sitting under a tree with our books, or of lounging in our rooms, but those when, putting temptation to self-indulgence firmly aside, we have worshipped God among his people, and paid him the tribute of our presence in his holy temple.

XIX

WEDDING-BELLS

THE wedding-march always thrills us with swift interest and sympathy. We never grow indifferent to the beauty of the bride, to the pomp and pageantry of the simplest wedding, to the little details of the event—the white gown, the flowers, the bride's demeanor, the ceremony itself, the manliness and tender pride of the newly made husband. It would, indeed, be a hard and cynical heart which should fail to wish all joy and strength and blessing to the two who join hands in faith and love and set out on the path of life together. All the better chance for happiness theirs if there has been a brief engagement.

There has been in recent years a change very much for the better in at least one aspect of the wedding preparations. Formerly, in families where most of the sewing was done at home, the bride's trousseau was so serious an affair that it often went far towards making an end of the

bride herself before the last stitch was taken. There had to be sets, full a half-dozen or more, of everything in the line of underclothing. One bride whom I recall, the daughter of people in rather moderate circumstances, made with her own hands eighteen separate articles of four different kinds of garments—seventy-two in all—tucked, flounced, lace-trimmed, ruffled, embroidered, and insertion-edged pieces of linen or cambric. This did not include any minor articles of costume, nor obviate the necessity laid upon her to hem quantities of towels and hem and hemstitch sheets and pillow-cases for her housekeeping outfit.

"She used to be so pretty," was whispered at the wedding. "Why, I would not have known her; she is as pale as a ghost!" And indeed she was, poor child! One would have thought her about to emigrate to a land where nothing could be bought and her wardrobe never be replenished, once its first supplies were exhausted. It was not wonderful that her health continued fragile long after marriage, and that her dear, first baby was a small bundle of nerves and temper, a trying morsel of humanity, who cried incessantly and slept under protest.

I do not think our brides of the period regard their weddings as simply pegs on which to hang innumerable clothes. To most of them the gate

which swings inward from the world into Eden on their wedding-day opens upon scenes of blessing and glad opportunity to do good and to add to the sunshine of life. No more beautiful and sacred thing exists on this earth than a new home, unless, perhaps, it be an *old* home, which has gathered around it the fidelities and the ministrations of many years. Home is the dearest refuge for which hearts can hope and men and women strive in this mortal sphere, and it requires two, complementing and supplementing one another, to make a perfect home.

The bride, on her day of gentle triumph, is fain to think that her skies will be all unclouded. Far be it from her to admit that her good man is capable of the errors and perversities common to the race. He seems in her eyes absolutely without the possibility of fault and beyond criticism. On his part she is regarded with an even more touching reverence. Half child, half angel, but wholly woman, and his very own, of course no other being ever was or ever will be like her.

Yet, singularly enough, many youthful husbands and wives find pinpricks in their bubble of joy, and stand amazed when it collapses, or they unexpectedly tread on pebbles which hurt their feet and make them cry out with pain. John was brought up by one mother, Jane by

another. In his family were certain standards, certain traditions, in hers another set of both, equally impressive and quite as conscientiously maintained and believed in. From the two families a new and different one will be formed, partaking probably of the best features of both. But the process of formation will be accompanied by some friction; it will not be at once possible for the two, who have become one, to thoroughly understand and to grow perfectly well acquainted and at home with one another. The happiness of marriage, granting a stock of true love at the beginning, grows and flourishes, notwithstanding occasional small difficulties at the outset, and the most devoted husbands and wives are those who have passed years together.

Love and candor and mutual respect, cemented by common-sense, build a good foundation. Over all the wedded hearts let us hope that prayers may be said and the new homes receive the divine benediction.

XX

A QUESTION OF PERSONAL LIBERTY

When children are in the nursery and the school-room, neither old enough to form independent judgments nor to desire a line of action different from that which their parents elect in their behalf, the question of personal liberty is, of course, in abeyance. But as young people mature the stirrings of their own lives are felt, and they cannot always accept the dictates of parental wisdom contentedly and in the spirit which makes for their advantage.

From this quite natural, and, indeed, inevitable condition of affairs, friction and disagreement sometimes arise, and the situation becomes perilous to all concerned. Parents, by insisting on what they consider their rightful claims, may become tyrannical and inconsiderate of all except their own authority. Children, equally bent on maintaining their position, may forget the deference due to those who have sheltered, provided for, and educated them from infancy to the period

of awakening responsibility. The rift grows wider daily, and though there may not be actual hostility there is on both sides a sense of injury and injustice. The perfect tranquillity of the domestic life is marred, and the jarring chords produce dissonance in the melody.

For example, in a certain very happy household, father, mother, sons, and daughters have, as a matter of course, attended the same church for a number of years. After a while a daughter discovers that she is not happily situated in that particular church. There is a side of her spiritual nature keenly receptive to influences which she does not find in the environment congenial and delightful to the rest of her family. It may be that much comes to this girl through her love of music and her appreciation of its nobler meanings, and the music in the home church is crude and colorless. Around the corner, or a few streets away, stands a church in which this portion of the service is elaborate and classic, where the music-loving nature would find itself uplifted as on wings and the artistic side of the soul be satisfied instead of antagonized.

Is it right or kind or Christian for parents in such a case to compel the grown daughter to remain with them simply because they do not comprehend her craving nor penetrate under the surface of her discontent? Would it not be wise

and tactful to give her freedom of action, and accord her the liberty of choice which, in a matter of this kind, every grown-up individual should possess? By what right do they shut the door of her soul and restrict her growth towards the divine?

I have chosen music as only one illustration. Sometimes the pastoral ministrations, the preaching, the style of presenting ethical thought, the methods of work in a church, or the social atmosphere, the trend of a congregation, are more acceptable to some members of the family than to others. A father in such a case, if he be arbitrary, may come down, as I have known fathers to do, with sledge-hammer firmness, saying, "You shall attend my church or none." This is a violation on his part of the first principles of Christian charity. No compulsion in matters of this kind should be laid upon conscience, and even the choice of caprice should be judiciously and tenderly dealt with. The important thing in a family is that the individuals in that family shall have room to grow symmetrically, to develop the best that is in them in a world that needs help, comfort, and brave battling for the right and the true. This is far more important than that an appearance of beautiful household unity shall always be presented to society.

In families where the children are trained from

the earliest years to constant attendance at church on Sunday there will seldom arise any vital difference of opinion on the subject of worshipping God when these children are grown up. No vital point is touched, no real truth endangered, by the fact that I, having arrived at manhood or womanhood, prefer to attend a church or to unite with a church in one street while my family make choice of another. This is merely a question of soil and sunshine. Some plants prefer the lowlands, some flourish on the heights, but all lift faces to the same sky.

Nothing can be worse for a man himself, however excellent his course seem in his own eyes, than that he should become narrow and despotic, forcing on another, even if that other be his own child, conclusions which are necessarily along the line of arrested development. God save any of us from mistaking self-will for a desire to serve Him!

XXI

THE GREAT GOOD

"It is now two weeks since I heard of the great good that has come to little Mary."

This sentence, beginning a letter of sympathy to a mother who had parted from a little child in circumstances of peculiar sadness, conveyed to the stricken heart its first gleam of comfort. "The great good that has come to little Mary!"

Living in a new and primitive settlement, with kindred and friends more than a thousand miles away and no immediate neighbors, the mother had seen her darling sicken and die. Her little grave was within sight of the house, across an untilled field, and since her bed had been hollowed there by her heart-stricken father's own hands the mother had not been able to raise her thoughts much higher than that scarred space. But the good man's letter came with a sweet, uplifting message. It reminded the mother that her child had been taken to *life*, to the dear presence of Christ, to fuller opportunities and wider privi-

leges, never to be handicapped by pain or sin or sorrow.

From the moment of reading the letter and of dwelling on "the great good" which the early translation to heaven meant, the mother bore her loneliness better. It was no longer desolation. It was the realization of a door in the house which had swung open into the near and almost visible heaven.

Friends, if we could always feel thus about those who go, with what grace of patience, what composure, what blessedness should we bear the separations which are inevitable. How should we, in "all tribulation, walk with uplifted heads, expecting our Lord from the heavens!"

"I do not fear death, I long for it. I do not look upon it as an evil, but as a blessing. Were it not for death, I could not believe that God is love."

These were the words of a good man who was laid to rest one sweet June day beside the wife who had left him in her youth, more than thirty years ago, to tread the shining way to the city of the King. A full, bright, beneficent life, but its crown was in the going home. The "great good" came when the servant was bidden to hear the Lord's "Well done." The "great good" comes the sooner to our little ones if Jesus call them early.

What most of us need, in order that we may go on with our work unfalteringly, is a deep sense of the unity of the family bond on earth and in heaven. We need to feel in our souls that life spans the stream of death as day follows day over the bridges of safe and quiet sleep.

At the funeral of a beloved only child, a dear girl eighteen years old, the pastor said to the agonized father and mother: "You could have sent this dear child away to school for a term of years and never looked upon her face during the interval, yet you would not have felt bereft in that absence. You could have placed her hand in that of another, and she might have gone with him to the world's end and you would not have complained. Think of this separation as of those, only with an exceedingly abundant hope and faith that you will go to her, and you know not how soon!"

Whatever else may be in this world, the "old, old fashion of death" and the "older fashion of immortality" never go out. Always for some of us there are heartaches. Always for some of us there are regrets. But, if we believe in the resurrection and the life, we possess for evermore fulness of blessing and the peace that passeth understanding.

XXII

OUR GIRL AS A WOMAN OF BUSINESS

One of the prettiest, most animated features of city life presents itself to the pedestrian who has occasion to take a constitutional in the early morning or late afternoon, when the streets are filled with girls going to and from their daily work. American girls are always attractive, and never more so than in their twenties, with the bright eyes, delicate coloring, and air of refinement which here are monopolized by no class, but are the birthright of all. The general diffusion of knowledge, the intelligence consequent upon a thorough common-school education, and the honorable desire to be independent and self-supporting, combine to give our girls a manner at once charming and admirable—a manner winsome in the eyes of good men and women, and in itself an armor of protection against the wiles of unscrupulous and evil-minded members of society. It is so much to a young girl's credit, so worthy a thing, that she prefers to relieve a

toiling father of some of his burdens, to care for an ailing mother, or to lift some pressure of anxiety from her home dear ones, one would fancy the very fact strong enough as an argument, in its way, to set our young business woman apart, and remove from her path all dangers from nets spread by outsiders. All fathers and sons and brothers, one would think, must feel the bond of honest comradeship with girls so brave, so straightforward, and so in earnest, but beyond this have no wish to draw, or to see these young girls drawn, into anything which bears even the appearance of evil. Every young girl is somebody's daughter, somebody's sister, somebody's friend, and society is very much concerned that its girls should be, not simply seem, but really be, pure, sweet, and above the suspicion of deceit and falseness. A man's ideal of his own womankind is always high, and it is safe to say that a girl cannot too highly value herself, nor keep her ideals too lofty.

Speaking of a young woman employed as a stenographer in a down-town office, a lawyer said to me, "The firm has raised Miss ——'s salary twice since she came here. Before engaging her, we had nearly resolved upon giving up the employment of women altogether, our office being exceedingly public, but Miss —— does her work, and comes and goes, like a man." "Say

rather," I replied, "like a sensible, well-poised woman. A business woman need not be masculine. The only thing asked of her is that, being a woman, she shall be business-like, and give the best her nature and training have endowed her with in return for the wages she earns."

I do not know how best to emphasize my belief that a woman in a business, as woman in any and every other relation, should keep fast hold of her womanliness. She must be prompt, faithful, energetic, and equal to her work; she must be responsible. But these are not qualities peculiar to sex, nor qualities which men possess to a higher degree, nor in greater measure, than women. These are the qualities which make good wives, mothers, and housekeepers, and they are within the reach of, and are the essentials of character for, women in every position in life. Environment brings tests to character, but it does not make character. A girl in a business office, doing her work with ability, punctuality, and thoroughness, should not imitate her associates in mannishness. She should simply be herself intent upon her work, and anxious to do her best.

Let our business girl beware of self-pity. Nothing is more mischievous, and nothing weaker. Why be sorry for yourself that you have to rise early, to go forth in all weathers, to sit at your

desk for hours at a time, to give full tale of bricks in your day's work? All this is drudgery or delight, according to the spirit which you bring to it. Regard yourself as valuable not only to the immediate firm which employs and pays you, but also as important to the whole commercial community in the business of which you are a factor, though only a humble and obscure one. Do not cheapen yourself by the feeling that you are to be pitied. You are, on the contrary, to be envied, because you have a definite sphere and are able to fill it. If you do not pity yourself you will resent pity as an offence if it is tendered you, directly or indirectly, by your business associates.

It is a good and safe rule for the business girl to accept no attentions which in any way distinguish her from other day workers in the office or shop. A girl asks her salary to the last dollar when she has earned it, and as large a salary as she is worth, as her services can command, but she does not want flowers on her desk, nor choice fruits, nor boxes of bonbons, nor invitations from her employers and their friends to luncheons and dinners and concerts. These and kindred attentions are compromising, and, so far as they are compromising, are not innocent. A great deal of sophistry exists on such subjects, and the pretty girl who occupies a seat at a table in the

midday restaurant, partaking of a dainty meal, at a cost far beyond that which her own modest purse can afford, may cheat herself into the belief that though she is doing an unconventional thing there is nothing morally wrong about it, and that she may therefore dare to be independent. Poor mistaken child! As a rule conventionalities are hedges reared by the general good sense and good feeling of the community, and the outside wilderness beyond their bounds is a land of gins and traps and snares, hard by which, for all its enchantments, lies the valley of the shadow of death.

The young girl in business should hold herself above every concealment. As she respects herself others will accord respect to her in turn.

XXIII

THE USE OF THE WORD "LADY"

"You will find comparatively few occasions when it will be proper to use the word 'lady,'" was said, in reply to an inquiry, by a recognized arbiter of etiquette. Those who have observed current forms of speech must have noticed the tendency of the moment to treat the beautiful appellative with disfavor, if not with scorn. In many instances when the word "woman" offends our sense of fitness and good taste, "woman" is nevertheless preferred, and the person who clings to the mode to which she has been accustomed all her life is informed that she is violating the code of fashion. The word "gentleman" suffers equally, and naturally, and one hears, with a sort of shiver, on the lips of young girls flippant sounding talk of "the fellows" or "the men," while only elderly people adhere to the more ceremonious and complimentary titles not now in vogue.

As a pronounced conservative I uplift a lance

for the defence of the temporarily dethroned usage. "Lady," according to Hamerton, who is good authority, may be defined as "woman in a high state of civilization." Regarded in its exquisite meaning of loaf-giver it is endowed with a veritable queenliness, for who should bestow largess but the matron, the mistress, the person at the head of affairs? Lady implies a certain social rank, a certain degree of refinement, a manifest measure of intelligence. Woman is a generic term, applicable to the entire sex and dignified when appropriately and nobly used; but lady is, so to speak, a term within a term, a decoration, the definite description of a finished and educated style of woman. It is a pity to drop this word of ceremony, of politeness, from usage till it is familiarly heard only in the speech of the conductor who takes your fare on the horse-car and in that of the policeman who guides you over a crowded street-crossing.

Of course, we all understand that the caprice of the moment is the result of reaction, and that it is, in a way, the protest of the better educated classes against an incorrect and misleading form adopted by the ignorant.

"Can you find a laundress who will undertake my washing?" I asked the pretty daughter of my summer hostess in the farm-house where I had taken up my abode for the season.

"Oh yes," she answered, glibly; "there is a white lady up the road and there is a colored lady in the village; they both take in washing, and will be glad to have yours."

Everybody sees at a glance that woman would have been here the appropriate word. "Sales-lady," "kitchen lady," lady used in any relation where work and wages are combined, is inappropriate. Not that the working-woman may not also in the truest sense be a lady, but that in her direct relation of worker she has entered the lists of those who strive and toil and win reward. Woman is the word for the conflict and the struggle; lady the word for the easeful place and the social affair. Thus, it is not fitting to say, "A woman gave a dinner or a luncheon to twelve guests." In her capacity of dinner-giving she was a lady. So, a gentleman entering a parlor in which his wife and several friends were seated would not be justified in addressing them brusquely, "Good-evening, women!" "Good-evening, ladies!" would carry a fine perfume of courtesy which the other form entirely lacks.

"Help those women who labored with me in the Lord" conveys a gracious recognition of the value of women to the church, but as fully and as truly the "elect lady" is a beautiful phrase, indicating in picturesque terseness the precise

status of the person described. A word to which nobody can object, appropriate in its place, is the word gentlewoman. Gentleman, gentlewoman, cannot offend the most fastidious, and of gentlewoman lady is the synonym.

A girl reproved me the other day when I said, "Mrs. C. is a lovely lady!" "You mean a charming woman," declared she of the bright eyes and confident lips of twenty. "No, I mean what I affirm," I maintained, stoutly. "Mrs. C. is lovely, and she is a *lady!*" And my mentor for the instant was silenced.

XXIV

HOW SHOULD AN OLD LADY DRESS?

I AM afraid that in our restless, aspiring life of to-day we are losing from society and the family one of the most picturesque and beautiful features of a former period—viz., the old lady. In our hot strife for success we all desire to keep our youth — not only our youth of spirit, our eager strength, our ability to be in the van of whatever is going on—but as well it is our aim to look young—at least, as young as we can. The frankly brave gentlewoman who acknowledges her age, and is not ashamed of the dignity of white hairs, nor blind to the charms imparted by experience of life and acquaintance with human nature, is less frequently met than she should be, though when we do meet her how glad and ungrudging is our homage.

The question, how should an elderly lady dress so as to render her appearance most attractive, is a pertinent one. In a city drawing-room recently a conspicuous figure was a stately woman

of seventy-five years, strong, rugged, and wholesome, as might be expected of one country born and bred, but dressed, alas, in a way to make one shiver. The thin gray hair was tightly drawn from the forehead and ears, and skewered with a hair-pin into a very compact little knot, like an exaggerated coat-button, at the back of the head. A narrow strip of linen collar, severe and plain, relieved the black gown, which was modelled in the tailor-made style in vogue among our young women. The result of the whole costume was unhappy. One wanted to get hold of that dear old lady and dress her, as she ought to have been dressed, with a cap of tulle, fleecy white and fleecy soft, covering her head, and carrying out its refining effect in broad white lappets, falling loosely over the shoulders, or in creamy satin strings tied beneath the chin. The cap is an elderly gentlewoman's best and queenliest headgear, and should be an indispensable part of her daily dress. Let it be white, if possible, though a black lace cap, with little loops of lavender or crimson, once so popular with stately dames in their sixties and seventies, is a beautiful addition to a woman whose complexion is not of the type in which fairness has fallen into a network of wrinkles.

There is a little book entitled "Dr. John Brown and His Sister Isabella," in which is given

a portrait of Miss Brown, ideally appropriate as a fashion-plate for elderly women. Also in "Memorials of a Quiet Life" and in the "Life of the Baroness Bunsen" there are pictures of aged ladies arrayed to perfection. These all have the cap. And they have also a dainty little shawl over the shoulders, or a gown with soft folds crossing over the breast, and some arrangement of soft lace veiling the neck and simply fastened upon the bosom or at the throat.

Across the years that have stretched between us since she went home to God, I see my mother thus attired in a gown innocent of furbelows or flounces, short enough to escape the ground, always either black or gray in color, and of soft, fine, unrustling fabric whether of silk or wool. The memory is a sacred one.

How sweet and soothing such a presence in a sick-room! What comfort in sitting beside such a friend at twilight, telling the story of the day and receiving strength from sympathetic counsel! Daughters and granddaughters should combine in the endeavor to dress the dear old mothers and aunties tastefully. Never should they *ordain* the style of dress for these dear ones, since nothing is so distasteful to old people as the being put under authority in matters personal; but they should influence, persuade, and,

if necessary, coax the dear old lady, who is, if she but knew it, the most ornamental person in the household, to let herself be made outwardly as lovely as she is in her inner soul.

XXV

A PLAIN TALK WITH COUNTRY GIRLS

Health and beauty for country girls. Why should they not always have them in perfection? The conditions of health ought to obtain in a country home, and a country girl should wear the rose-bloom of beauty in her cheek, have the elastic, springing gait of vigorous youth by right, and outshine her city sister in color and glow, while her angles should be rounded and cushioned, her form erect, her head well poised, her carriage that of a princess.

Health precedes beauty as a foundation a palace. And health is dependent on several very plain and perfectly manageable conditions, some of which are neglected by women young and old, so that diphtheria, typhoid-fever, and other deadly diseases lie in wait for them and their beloved ones.

To see that no decaying *débris* of any kind is in a cellar or outbuilding, that water (suds or slops) is not thrown upon the ground to percolate

through it and poison a well, to look after the drainage of a place, and to burn up everything that must spoil and cannot be put to use, may come within the province of a sensible country girl. The outbreaks of mysterious dysentery and similar epidemics, directly traceable to poisoned wells and poisonous heaps of rotting vegetation, are disgraceful to village women, who should have done away with this source of infection, each beside her own door.

My country girl who would be well and strong must forego the doubtful luxury of a feather-bed. Heaped high in the middle and mounded off at the sides, the feather-bed yet holds its own in many a country home, though it is very rarely found in the city at this date. Feathers are enervating. A moderately hard mattress over a wire or a slat spring is better for young limbs and backs. A curled hair mattress is perfection, but many cheaper substitutes are clean and cool, while a very comfortable addition to any bed is made by laying upon it a thickly wadded comforter made of cotton-wool between two covers of calico or muslin.

Next to a bed comes fresh air in a sleeping-room. No one can be well, consequently no one can be beautiful, who sleeps in an ill-ventilated apartment. You must flood your room with pure outdoor air by raising and lowering your window

both at the bottom and the top. A thin woollen blanket in summer will be a precaution against taking cold, and in winter, in very chilly and rigorous climates, a flannel nightgown will be an admirable defence. Plenty of bed-clothing well aired and plenty of air in the sleeping-room, remember, if you wish absolute immunity from colds, catarrhs, and the first premonitory symptoms of that insidious disease, consumption.

I am constantly surprised to find among girls brought up in the country a dislike to the sort of food that is good for them. Milk and cream, fresh eggs, well-cooked rare meats, very little cake, preserves, and pie, and abstinence from eating between meals, will usually insure plumpness and a good complexion.

Plumpness in opposition to thinness and scrawniness is very desirable, and the use of cereals for breakfast, of fruits and of vegetables properly prepared, conduces to this end. But a fine, clear-grained skin, freedom from pimples and roughness, is not to be had except by those who bathe often and regularly, keep the pores of the skin open and take plenty of outdoor exercise. To bathe once a week in hot water from head to foot is not enough, though some deluded people think so, taking the Saturday night's bath with an agreeable sense of virtue. One should bathe every day from head to foot, sponging the body

rapidly and thoroughly with either hot or cold water, as she prefers; then rub with a coarse towel till the skin is in a glow. Avoid tea and coffee; exercise actively, stay out-of-doors in all weathers two or three hours a day, and you will find yourself well and strong and ready for anything the day may bring.

Country girls need to be reminded of the necessity to care for the teeth. A visit twice a year to the nearest dentist will save money and prevent pain, and very likely the loss of those useful servants and warders. To country girls, too, there is needed a warning word about tampering with drugs. It is so easy to become addicted to the use of quinine or iron, or some other tonic, that one who is remote from a doctor and who has a family medicine-chest in the closet flies to that, and whenever she is a little run down invokes the aid of the remedy which ought to be religiously kept for the far-off day of illness. By all means let the girl avoid this temptation. Very often a day's rest or a little outing, a short visit, even a new book to read, something to change the current of ideas, will bring one up from the temporary prostration and renew the loss of tissue.

It is woman's privilege, and also her duty, to be pleasing to the eyes, as well as charming to the taste, of her friends. The city girl has heard so

much of the need of physical culture that this little sermon does not address itself so much to her as to the fine, true-hearted country girl, who should set a high value on the privileges of her environment.

XXVI

WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

I AM so much more interested in women as they go about the homely duties of private life, the every-day prosaic cares of the kitchen, the nursery, and the drawing-room, than I am in women called to assume the responsibilities of public office, that I am sensible of a little lack of sympathy in thinking of these latter. We women who had our training in the days and from the hands of a generation who were bound by traditions which placed modest self-effacement high in the calendar of womanly virtues, and taught girls that they must be sincere and steadfast and thorough, yet withal contented to remain in, and fill, a certain well-defined "sphere," find some difficulty in adjustment to the present order of things. The movement which has brought women so largely to the front challenges our criticism, and, so to speak, conquers our approval, the approval not being spontaneous. With many of us, too, there is always

a reserve in the background; we are sure that we are not yet ready to let woman take upon herself any more or greater responsibilities than those which the Lord endowed her with when He called her to be the mother of all living.

If by "public life," however, we mean to speak of women in great organizations, carrying forward missionary and temperance and philanthropic movements, or of women on school-boards, or in prison reform, or in associations of any kind which have in view the blessing and benefiting of the world, the way is somewhat cleared.

Women do not step out of their sphere in undertaking such work. They simply make the sphere a little larger around. The woman who swept her own dooryard now sweeps an area in front of her house, and helps a brigade of her neighbors to do the same. By-and-by the town will be cleaner.

To the necessities and requirements of public life women must bring precisely the qualities which distinguish them in the life that is private and, in a manner, obscure. The motherly woman, who has brought up her family well and carefully, will be motherly to the greater family of boys and girls in the public schools when she is added to a committee of supervisors on a board of education. The sisterly woman, whose tact

and sympathy made home sweet and peaceful, will extend helping hands to her sisters in workshops and factories, in crowded tenements, and in poverty, misery, and sin.

Precisely the qualities which make a woman a notable housekeeper, a good economist, a successful factor in society, a useful church member, will add to and increase her usefulness when she answers a summons which bids her enter a more conspicuous field. In proportion as she continues gentle, self-sacrificing, pure and true, as she cultivates the finer graces and the social gifts which have made her the queen in woman's kingdom, she will dignify and ennoble her new rôle. She must be the Christian woman, combining Mary's devotedness with Martha's practical energy, if she would enter public life to any purpose. Forgetting herself in the good at which she aims, the simple, straightforward woman will do all she can, and then gladly say good-bye to the public and kneel down to fan the fire on the home hearth.

Nor must we forget that there are many communities in which, for one cause or another, the educated women outnumber the educated men. I can think of whole townships from which most of the young men have departed, leaving only gray-headed seniors to till the ground, keep the few shops, attend to the needful business,

and fill the several official positions. Work in great cities, or in the mining regions, or the broad farmlands of the West has allured the boys. But the girls remain. They are of all ages, from the lovely young thing with the sea-shell pink in her cheeks, to the faded but wide-awake and intelligent spinster, with opinions on many subjects and wide reading to back them. They have been at school and at college, and have received an intellectual training which is a manifest endowment for them in the public life to which circumstances seem to call them. Who shall say that a woman, thoroughly equipped for a vocation, has a right to turn from it simply because of her sex? John being unavoidably absent, is not the door open to Jane, who is here to answer to her name?

XXVII

OUR DEAR ONES GONE

If our dear ones gone could speak to us from the silence into which they have passed, I think they would sometimes reproach us for our avoidance of their names, for our dropping them out of the household speech, for our tacit accepting of them as dead and, therefore, gone. This common and often cowardly way of treating those who have left this world sometimes fills us who are yet here with a sort of wistful, prophetic sadness. "Shall the day dawn," we whisper to ourselves, "when to all the bright stir and happy bustle of this dear home, in which we are now so important, we shall be as less than nothing and vanity, as alien and apart as though nothing here had ever been ours to handle, ours to direct, ours to love and care for?" The thought falls like a chill and a shade upon the brightest summer day, for there is an instinctive jealousy for our own rights, a feeling, God-implanted, that we do

not wish to be forgotten when we are no more upon the earth.

In a multitude of cases it is an instinct of self-protection which prompts to this silence where the beloved dead are concerned. We miss them so acutely, the wound is so fresh, the ache is so poignant, that we cannot bear to speak of them; we shudder at doing so to the indifferent, who may be bored, or who may not understand, and we fear equally by speech or allusion to awaken a slumbering pain in the heart of some other as loving and as loyally regretful as we know that we ourselves are.

So it comes to pass gradually, or at once, that the little child who sleeps in the narrow bed under the daisies is never mentioned in the home. Her brothers and sisters seldom think of her, nor is heaven nearer or more real to them because she is there. The dear mother ceases to be an influence with her sons and daughters, because nobody repeats her words, and her ways are no longer the law of the house. The young brother, whose sun went down before it had climbed past the morning, has a name starred on the college roll and inscribed on a marble tablet, but he is not "Joe" or "Harry" to anybody in the home that was so proud of him. Neighbors notice how rapidly his parents have aged since he died, but that is all. Per-

haps a young heart somewhere grieves for him in reverent silence, too, but the lips of love are sealed; *she* cannot speak.

Would it not be far better to do as here and there a woman does, or a family does, and keep naturally and as a matter of course the household names in use after the darlings who bore them have gone? I know one or two homes where it is the custom to do this, where "Dave" and "Mattie" and "John" are often quoted as of old, and are as familiar in the current speech of the household as if they had only gone to Egypt or to Switzerland instead of to heaven, which may be so much nearer, which, indeed, being our Father's house and the abiding-place of thousands of our kindred, is not far from every one of us.

To keep our dear ones gone in tender recollection there seems nothing more appropriate than the carrying on of whatever work they loved. If they took an interest in philanthropy or charity, in missions, in a hospital or a school, we may plan and give and labor personally and steadily for the same causes just as they would have done had they been spared, and every kind word spoken, every dollar contributed, every loving act of service on our part will be their best and most enduring memorial.

XXVIII

AN ATTRACTIVE MANNER

Two young men were established in a similar business, side by side, on a city street. Both were known to be perfectly trustworthy, the prospects of each at the start were about equal, but one succeeded very much better than the other, enlarging his store after a while and striking out into new lines, while the first seemed barely able to maintain his original position.

"How do you account for the difference?" was asked, and a customer summed it up by saying: "It's entirely a question of manner. If you go to Box to be measured for a suit of clothes he looks at you with as much indifference as if you were a stick of wood; he shows you goods with an air of *ennui* and never assists you by a word of advice. It is apparently a bore to him to wait on you at all, and sometimes he is so glum that the atmosphere all around is positively frigid. If, on the other hand, you go to Cox, he is just as friendly as he can be. He comes forward cor-

dially to meet you, says something pleasant, and takes an interest in you personally. Cox cares about your tastes, and he tells you what you ought to buy and how it ought to be made. Fellows like Cox and hate Box. It's a question of manner."

The question of manner has more to do with success than many people think, and it also has much to do with happiness. It writes itself, too, on the countenance, for one whose manner is frosty will have a forbidding set of the mouth, an icy expression, will repel instead of attracting. Moods affect the manner, and those who let their moods control them instead of assuming control of their moods are decidedly uncomfortable people to have relations with, either in business or in society.

"My Aunt Lydia would take any trouble, go to any expense, to serve one of us," remarked a girl of an elderly relative, "but she is so disagreeably satirical and snubs one so unkindly that we avoid going to her house, and we fairly throng Aunt Carrie's because she is so pleasant. But yet Aunt Carrie does not put herself out for any one and Aunt Lydia is very unselfish."

There are good men and women who trample upon conventionalities, despising them as trivialities and clinging to rude or uncouth forms no longer in vogue simply from a sentiment of in-

dependence. Do these dear, mistaken beings ever remember that we should not suffer our good to be evil spoken of, and would it not be nobler for them, even in small matters, to cultivate attractiveness of manner?

Nothing more effectually distinguishes the gentlewoman than a winning manner towards children and servants. In a large up-town shop in New York I was waited upon lately by a sweet-faced young girl whose weary pose and tired look went to my heart. She had occasion to summon a little "cash" to her side, and she said, pleasantly, "Susie, go to such a one, dear, and bring me some more of these garments." The child beamed, for not every saleswoman called her "dear"! And I knew the young woman, who was so patiently trying to find just what I wanted, to be that most beautiful thing on earth, a lady. Her manner stamped her thus.

XXIX

OTHER-WORLDLINESS

I SUPPOSE no question presents itself more constantly to the mind of a conscientious woman than one which may be formulated after this manner: "How far may I venture into worldly amusements and recreations and yet retain my influence on the side of religion? Is it right for me to do this or that thing which my husband and sons plead for me to do, to go here or there with my young daughters? Where shall I draw the line between fidelity to the highest duty and weak compliance with the persuasions of my friends?"

It would help those of us who are sometimes hard beset on such points as this to remember that there is never for the Christian any real conflict between duty and inclination. Right is eternally right, and wrong is everlastingly wrong. But we, poor, finite creatures — easily biased, easily prejudiced, freighted by traditions of the past, swayed more than we imagine by the opin-

ions of those around us—may well be perplexed and troubled when we endeavor to govern our conduct from the outside by a set of arbitrary rules. The letter killeth. It is the spirit that giveth life.

Our Lord said in that marvellous prayer of His for His disciples, "I pray not that Thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldst keep them from evil." The world is our present home, our sphere of action, our battle-ground, our school-room, our vineyard given us to till. To one life appeals with certain interests and brings certain responsibilities. To another life also comes, full-handed and stern-browed, but with entirely different tasks and obligations. Each to his own Master standeth or falleth. No individual has a right to dictate within definite and particular limits what another may or may not do.

The main and most important element in Christian conduct is the motive which animates it. No gauge, except that which tips Ithuriel's spear, can estimate the unconscious impressiveness of a noble Christian life. Not long ago, on a brilliant social occasion, I saw in the midst of a notable group a lovely woman, a woman whose days are spent in rare self-sacrifice, whose smile is always ready, on whose lips is always the law of kindness. As soon as she entered the room

the atmosphere had seemed to soften and brighten, and when somebody said to her neighbor, "There is dear Miss H.," I was not surprised to hear the reply, "I am so glad. She keeps us all at high-water mark."

The late Rev. Dr. William M. Taylor, in a little book entitled "The Christian in Society," said pithily, "In settling such questions we should have reference not to the fashion of our circle or the gratification of our own curiosity, but to the glory of God." A shrewd old Scotch capitalist gave this advice to a young man entering business: "Ay give yourself the benefit of the doubt."

If conscience troubles us, if our spiritual grade is lowered, by a certain course, ought we not to make it a matter of earnest prayer? Ought not other-worldliness to be a distinctive sign in or of the Christian in this world? I heard a college senior say not long ago, in reference to a girl friend, "A man is better for knowing her. She never lowers her standard."

XXX

FULLY RIPE

Summer days and winter days, and all days alike, God is gathering many of the dear old people to Himself. It is beautiful to think of the surprise and pleasure which await some of the venerable ones who have lingered with us in great feebleness, and sometimes in great pain, when once their feet shall have crossed the cold death waves and touched the land beyond.

Little by little their hold on life's tasks has been loosening, day by day they have relinquished duties which they once thought could not be delegated, almost imperceptibly they have ceased to be a part of the active life of church or town. None the less in the household the dear old people have been more and more important and influential, their very presence a benediction, and when they are called away their vacant places seem very desolate, and those who are left scarcely know how to go on with their lives.

I am tempted to quote from a letter on my

desk, reeeived from the daughter of a sweet and graeious woman whose death was a bereavement to a host of friends. Up to seventy-seven, though obliged to save her strength and "walk softly," this dear matron had retained her interest in life, in works of eharity, in all that had to do with goodness and love in the world. Suddenly the message eame that she was needed "up higher," and the old home to whieh she had gone a bride in the radiant beauty of eighteen summers, the home in whieh her whole life theneeforward had been spent, grew very sad and dark. It was as if a lamp had gone out. But the dear daughter writes: "Mother always made it her rule, no matter how heavy her sorrow, to answer every word of sympathy she reeeived, and we are doing the same." Still the mother's unfailing courtesy and sweet appreeiation of others remain the way of the family—a lovely and attraetive way.

It has been borne in upon me that I ought to say my plain word of remonstranee to some who are perhaps a little thoughtless about the eomfort and dignity of aged relatives. Nothing in life is more pathetie than the sight of an old man or an old woman who is simply tolerated in the home of his or her kindred.

"I am very tired and lonesome," wrote an aged father not long ago to a friend. "It is hard to

be eighty-four years of age and to have to board with strangers, because none of the children you brought up have room for you under their own roofs. It is hard to live so long that you are in the way."

Had not several similar cases come directly under my observation, I would think it exceptional and very strange and inexplicable — this indifference on the part of younger relatives to the feelings and well-being of the old. But we are so in the habit in this period and in this country of considering the young people, their wishes, pleasures, and conveniences, first, that sons and daughters excuse themselves—at least, occasionally—for uprooting parents from the homes where they have been supreme, or for letting them read between the lines that they are, to some degree, an encumbrance. How one who is not tenderly kind and thoughtful in her conduct towards the old can ever forgive herself for the lack is a puzzle to those who realize that the stay of the old among us is at best the lingering of the withered leaf upon the tree.

So it comes to pass that a distinguishing grace of youth, reverence, is not always seen among us, that our children grow up self-centred and lacking in that crowning beauty of manner—regard for those who are weaker than they, and who must take their time in whatever they attempt.

The greatest boon, could a young girl only see it, would be to grow up in the house with a grandmother, and that a grandmother who should neither be ignored nor neglected.

True, old people are sometimes difficult. So, for that matter, are young people at times. To live in unbroken harmony even with your very dearest requires constant watchfulness, much prayer, and not a little self-denial. And a blessing will surely come to those who rise up before the hoary head, and smooth with careful hand the path for the feet that begin to falter.

Yes, they are going home, our beloved old friends, surely going home. Shall we know them when we meet again? They will not be bowed and broken; they will not be sick and ailing; they will not be tired nor sad. But by their sweetness, their maturity, their beauty, their warm welcome, and kind hand-clasp we will recognize our aged ones, grown young in the Father's house. Fully ripe, God is gathering them to Himself.

XXXI

THE REFLEX INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN MISSIONS

Among the best influences which can enter a home in Christian America may be counted an interest in the conversion of the world. No smaller sentiment is so potential as this, which strikes deep roots into heart and conscience. Nothing else so widens the domestic horizon. Nothing else gives so strong an impulse to noble liberality, so sure an uplift to family prayer. The reflex influence of foreign missions is so distinctly perceptible for good in the lives and characters of those who endeavor to forward them that, on selfish grounds alone, the church would do wisely in stimulating and encouraging its members to more intelligent activity here.

An intelligent interest in any subject presupposes a degree of knowledge upon it which can be acquired only by attention and study. The woman thoroughly awake to the importance of foreign missions is not languidly indifferent, caring nothing about ways and means, heedless

how the Lord's work is carried on, so that she, at least, be not called upon to aid it. She is not satisfied with dropping a silver coin or two into the collection-box when the theme has been presented from the pulpit, going contentedly next day to her shopping or her housekeeping, and forgetting the heathen for another year.

On the contrary, an interest and a share in the foreign missionary's work bring to pass in the home and the family therein the desire to read missionary literature. They turn eagerly and regularly to the missionary columns in their religious paper. Items, bits of news, statistics are noted and discussed. Lives of missionaries, of all biographies most fascinating and most replete with romance, drift into the home and are read aloud in the evening. The missionary names, those starred and heroic names on the calendar of our modern saints, are familiar to the children. The home sends out its loving thoughts, sometimes its monthly letters and its personal gifts and tokens, far beyond its visible and tangible bounds, outside the remotest circle of its kindred and the farthest group of its friends, to reach the bungalow in Madras, the mission quarters in Yokohama, the hospital in Bombay. There and elsewhere brave men and women work and pray.

At home we, too, must work and pray with

these distant toilers, and so doing we grow nearer them and nearer their Lord and ours.

Gradually, as the consecration deepens, this reflex influence quickens the nature and makes it willing for sacrifice. Said a mother to me not long ago: "I can give everything I have to God except my boy. I am in terror lest he shall come to me some day and say, 'Mother, I have resolved to go myself as a missionary.' I simply cannot part with my only son."

And yet I have faith to feel that when this gift is asked of this Christian woman she will be able to yield, without reservation, this, her most precious treasure, if it must be offered "In His name," for all the work of missions, here and abroad, is educational and in the line of progress —progress outward, upward, heavenward.

XXXII

THE ACCEPTANCE OF DISAPPOINTMENT

DISAPPOINTMENT is not usually included among the great calamities of this life, and we are from childhood on urged to bear it with equanimity. Looking back in these older years, and from the higher standpoint, we often pity the poor little hearts that used to belong to us, remembering how they ached and grieved over the manifold disappointments that were their portion.

How it may be with others I do not know, but I sometimes have a puzzled feeling about the small person in short frocks and a wide-brimmed hat who used to be myself, and to take her disappointments *hard*, as if they were bitter pills. Poor child, how little she dreamed of the good that many of these afflictive experiences held in store for her! And how difficult it would have been for her to realize that she would ever learn to accept *dis*appointment patiently and thankfully as God's *ap*pointment, and therefore the

best possible gift that a day could bring in its wake.

If you ever climbed a steep hill on a burning summer's day you vividly recollect the dust, the heat, the weariness. But you came to an upland, shaded and sweet, and there under a green tree you sat down to rest. Over your head a bird sang, dropping at intervals snatches of silvery music and lifting your heart heavenward the while. There, in fulness of content, you saw below you people toiling and climbing, as you had climbed and toiled, and you were sorry for them, yet all the time you knew that if they could but arrive at your point of view they would make very light of the roughness of the road.

So it is with many of our experiences after they are passed. Chiefly is it so, in a majority of instances, with those disappointments which have to do with our earthly business. We lose, at a certain turning of the way, an opportunity of aiding ourselves materially. If we had done this or the other thing instead of the thing we did do we would have added to our real estate or increased our bank account, instead of having impoverished our families and limited our fortunes. Many a man broods over some fancied error of judgment until he creates a sense of disappointment where none should have existed. The truth is that, having done our best in any

position, we should acquiesce heartily in God's arbitrament for us as better than ours.

The father sees and judges for the child with loving forethought and appreciation of conditions unknown to the latter. Are we not God's dear children, and shall we not trust our Heavenly Father?

A disappointment may involve only a personal pleasure. We anticipated a guest and made ready for her, arranging for walks and drives, planning how to do her honor, beautifying her room, thinking of dainty dishes which should tempt her appetite. At the last moment, with the larder full and the bed spread and the flowers plucked to make the house look festive, comes a telegram, "Detained by unlooked-for circumstances." How flat the taste of creams and sauces! how dull the evening that was to have been so bright! The disappointment is poignant. A pinprick will wound if it penetrate deeply enough.

Or you are yourself about to undertake a journey. Your trunk is packed, your ticket is taken, your very farewells are spoken, you have told everybody of your intention, and then something occurs to prevent, and you must remain at home. Take the pretty best gown out of its folds and hang it on the nail in the darkest corner of the closet. Resume the commonplace

tasks that were to have been intermitted in the holiday time. Explain to sympathizing friends that your purpose has changed. The thing is trivial as compared with a great disaster or a heartbreaking bereavement, but, nevertheless, it occasions acute distress for the moment, and it is a proof of rare strength of character when it is accepted without murmuring and put behind one cheerfully.

The day almost invariably comes when, like the mountain climber, the disappointed person is forced to the conclusion that the lesson was not in vain. Philosophy does not convince us of this at the moment, but, looking back, we are consoled in the event.

XXXIII

A FALSE STANDARD OF SUCCESS

Is it not time that in our American life we adopt a higher standard in regard to what constitutes real success? It is not too much to say that five boys out of six are taught by precept and example to consider the acquisition of money as the noblest aim in life; that they are trained to look on the man who begins in poverty and ends with a fortune as the man above all others to be commended, honored, and envied. At the bottom of the many shipwrecks of honesty and integrity which our daily papers report, do we not discover the desire to accumulate money, not by the old, safe ways of thrift and industry, but by some magic of speculation, some wonderful stroke of "luck"? Money is the idol erected in our midst as an object of worship—a god sordid, fierce, cruel, and rapacious as any demon to whom the heathen bend the knee.

Our girls do not escape the fatal contagion, and into their bright young lives there enters

the wish for beauty and luxury which money can procure. They accept or refuse the lover, not on the ground of his personal worth, but because of his business prospects, or his connection with wealthy kinsmen; and so love is profaned in the temple of the home, and self-indulgence, fashionable ambition, and the sin of covetousness obtain a foothold in womanly hearts.

To be sure, no man who sets out in life with only brains, energy, and will as an outfit, and who wrenches financial success from the reluctant grasp of competition, is a weakling. Such a man, if honest and honorable, deserves praise, because he has had a purpose in life and held on to it with tenacity; because he has overcome his own temptation to indolence, and made his one talent ten in the world's market. Such a man, consecrating his well-earned gains, giving to charity, to reforms, or for religious uses, is noble, and deserves recognition for what he is and does. But our mistake is in our lack of discrimination, and our vulgar and stupid way of alluding to rich men, frequently irrespective of character, as if they should be regarded with favor, simply because of their wealth; in our exaltation of material over intellectual eminence; in our confusion of mind on the subject, which leads us to set low ideals before our young people, instead of showing them that we agree with that everlasting

word of the Scripture: "The life is more than the food, and the body than the raiment. A man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth."

We cannot begin too early in their lives to teach children the imperative demands of a perfect honesty. First, let them see that in the eyes of their parents many things are more to be desired than money; that education, books, intelligence, scientific knowledge, the friendship of good people, are all of greater importance than the counting up of stock in bank, or the adding of acres to the farm or building lots to the property in town. When economies must be practised, let them be to the end that more money may be given away, not that more may be saved. The father and mother who sit down with a lad, invite him to their confidence, and ask him to share their planning that the donation to some great beneficence may this year be doubled or trebled, have taken a forward step in making of their son a large-hearted, liberal Christian man in days to come. If there is frugality, let it be of the brave kind that stints and denies itself to send the boys and girls to college; or, better still, that scrimps and contrives, in order that an orphan child in the circle of kindred, or in the list of acquaintances, may have advantages equal to those of one's own children.

Next, let mothers frown sternly down all temporary borrowing from a fund which does not belong to the children, as, for instance, money committed to a little treasurer for safe keeping. In no circumstances should a penny of such money be diverted for one-half hour from its place, and its original purpose, to serve the convenience of the one who has it in trust. The principle of honesty is the same, whether the sum in hand be fifty cents or fifty thousand dollars. Debts should not be contracted. If contracted, let the child understand that there can be neither ease nor rest for conscience or heart until they are paid. A nice and delicate sense of honor should be fostered in the home, and no dallying with temptation should be allowed when the question is one of rights to possessions. That an article, or a sum of money, belongs to a brother or sister gives another in the family no right to claim it, and people should strictly respect the rights of one another, especially to personal property, in the home.

In our talk around the fireside, when we are off guard, and in the thoughts which lie back of, and inspire, our talk, let us be careful to give money, and the success which is built on money, the true place. Money is means to an end. If it can serve patriotism, Christian progress, erect hospitals, build better homes for the poor, feed

and clothe the hungry and naked, send Bibles and *Daysprings* and *Morning Stars* across the sea to those who sit in darkness, then blessed be money. But it is only a servant, and should wear the servant's livery. The rich man in bondage to his wealth may be a pauper, and many a poor man is in God's sight, and his own feeling, richer than a millionaire, and a very king in true greatness. It rests with the home to set up the best standards in this matter.

XXXIV

SUNDAY CONVERSATION

To say that in many cases the serious impressions derived from a sermon are dissipated in the church aisle, or the church vestibule, or on the way from the church to the home, is to make an apparently sweeping assertion, and yet it is not an exaggerated statement of a familiar fact. For in the transit from the pew door to the church door there is time for trivial gossip, for an airy criticism on the music, on a friend's new gown or bonnet, on a neighbor's wrap, or a child's change from kilts to trousers—for much that is insignificant. Mrs. E. was personally concerned with the truth to which she listened, but Miss D. drove away her sober thought by a laughing reminiscence of yesterday's gayety, or an impulsive bit of planning for to-morrow's frolic. No wonder that the minister often reaches Sunday night weary and discouraged, so much of his endeavor being nullified, not by the sinners, but by the saints, of his congregation.

In times of revival it is evident that there is reformation here. People go and come to God's house, and from it again, and their faces are earnest, their voices hushed, their spirits are absorbed in devotion, even while they walk the street. An arrest is for the moment laid on the impulse to worldliness which so interferes with heavenward progress and hallowed thoughts. As flowers which have withered in a drought spring up anew after the blessing of the rain, so in days of the right hand of the Most High the hearts that love the Master are refreshed and invigorated, and are so brought into touch with Jesus that trifling becomes impossible in hours so sweet and sacred.

Of Sunday conversation at home—not in those exalted moods when it is easy to live on a high plane, and when the soul is conscious of breathing in a divine atmosphere—but in the common experiences of our lives, what shall we say? First, that it should be regulated by principle, and not left to the accidents of emotion. A thoughtful English writer, commenting on the text, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words condemned," remarks that our thoughts may be beyond our control, but our spoken words are within our power. To a large extent this is true. We may speak, or refrain from speaking, and we may choose our own

themes. To limit our range of talk in the household to strictly religious topics would hardly be possible or desirable, especially since the attempt would result in perfunctory conversation which would have little real vitality; but the spirit of Sunday's talk should be religious, and not secular. Week-day subjects and engagements may be put aside with the week-day work, and the patterns and prices of new gowns, the shortcomings of servants, the comparative merits of different remedies, the enchanting strains of the last concert, the beauties of the art gallery, or the interest of the novel which at present enjoys the greatest popularity, are all secular, and let down our minds and our talk from the higher to the lower levels. It is not absolutely essential to home happiness on Sunday that there should be a great flow of talk; even if we are somewhat quiet and a little subdued in manner and speech, that might be for our soul's profit.

But I know Christian households to which the pearl of days, brings no unwelcome restraint, in which, indeed, the table and the library and the drawing-room are brighter, and wear the air of being ready for a dear and honored guest, even the King of Kings. There is soberness, but no sadness; there are loving looks and gentle tones; there is a tender hush before church time, which sends old and young to the sanctuary with hearts

prepared for devotion and the reception of instruction; there is an alert, eager interest in the Sunday-school and the lesson of the day which furnishes an admirable topic for conversation; there are hours when the mother or the older sister sits at the piano, and the children gather about her and sing hymns; and often there are outspoken joy and sincere congratulations over the conversion of some wandering soul, over the admission to the church of some one who will henceforth follow wherever the great Captain leads.

The persons responsible for the tone of Sunday conversation at home are, naturally, the parents. They, rather than the young people, may gently establish a habit and maintain a standard. Father and mother may not be able to think beforehand of topics fit for the day, but they may avail themselves of suggestions from the pulpit or the religious paper. It is a good old-fashioned plan to discuss the sermon after the return from church, and at the midday meal. If it is the family custom to do this, the listening will be the more attentive, and there will be neither confusion nor consternation among the boys and girls if they are asked to repeat the text.

XXXV.

HOME AFTER COLLEGE LIFE

College life, full to the brim of stimulating and interesting experiences, full of agreeable companionship, brightened by what is, I think, the very pleasantest thing in life—the sense of definite accomplishment and the realization of growth and development along lines of one's own choosing—comes to an end at last. For the young man the four years' term has all the way been a bridge, or a succession of stepping-stones, leading to business or to a profession, and while his spirit is stirred at leaving his alma mater, and separating from his classmates, still, his feeling at the return to his home is necessarily very different from that which agitates his sister.

In many instances the girl, too, has her career beckoning her. She means to be a professor, a journalist, a doctor, or an artist, to take up, after the requisite supplementary college study or other antecedent training, whatever she has chosen as her life-work. She hopes for a career.

Yet after all, and happily for society, which needs domestic women and home-making women far more than it needs women, however well equipped and brilliant, in the several professions, the large majority of college girls go home after their graduation, and there they remain for a while its joy and pride, leaving it for the queenly dignity of wifehood and a home of their very own.

Undeniably, home life in contrast to college life is sometimes flat and insipid. At once it is not easy to drop the old routine; and by comparison the new, which used to be the old, appears trivial and inconsequent. Sometimes a girl has to make acquaintance with her mother after years of other occupations and interests. The mother has not mentally kept pace with the daughter, as how could she be expected to do, considering the nature of her occupations and the lack of change and recreation in her prosaic daily life? Most mothers have spent their lives, as I heard one say not long ago, "in working hard to make other people's work light." The girl means to be loyal, and she crushes back the longing for that wide-awake, sprightly, and almost miraculously *young* woman, her favorite professor, whose birthdays must have counted as many as her mother's. She resists the temptation to be patronizing; she encounters resistance if she tries to change the home ways and

to relieve her mother of tasks which have become to the older woman as sacredly her own as her heart-beat, and as inflexibly ordered as the rising of the sun.

The college girl at this period is apt to wonder whether she might not better have stayed at home in the first place, and, if she be an ordinary person, she indulges in a little foolish self-pity. If, on the contrary, she be extraordinary, she bravely reminds herself that the end of all discipline is to make good soldiers, and that a soldier's duty is to serve wherever the commander sends him. Sealed orders are as imperative as any other orders, and there never fails to dawn a day when one breaks the seal.

This girl simply sets herself to be that dearest, sweetest thing on earth—a loving sunbeam of a daughter at home. She fits into the chinks. She enables her hard-working father to get a glimpse of the poetry of life. His youth returns as he watches her bright face; her swift intellectual processes charm and amaze him; he grows gallant and courtly as he escorts this fair young creature about, a girl who has enough of himself in her to be keenly in sympathy with him; the father becomes lover-like, and the daughter brings himself and her mother into closer union. What she is now she could not have been lacking the college training and discipline.

XXXVI

THE NEW WOMAN

When a phrase previously unknown suddenly appears in print, and is often heard in conversation, it becomes in order to ask what it means. How shall we precisely define so nebulous a being as the new woman? For nebulous she certainly is, melting away into thin vapor when one demands of her who and what she is, whence she hails, and where she is going. Among the thousands and tens of thousands who jostle us as we walk on the crowded highway, which is the new woman, and what business has she in the path, and whither is she leading those who follow in her wake?

The new woman is popularly supposed to be a woman of liberal education and advanced ideas, a woman prepared to maintain her rights and claim her privileges, and make and keep a fair standing-ground for herself in whatever field she chooses to exploit her convictions or exert her abilities. She is supposed to look with a certain

disfavor on domestieity, to go about with a ehip on her shoulder among old-fashioned people who fancy that a woman's natural sphere is in the narrow world of home. The new woman, we learn ineidentally, eares little for marriage, regarding it as an episode in life, but proudly holding herself above the old stupid notion that love and matrimony are eardinal points in the destiny of her sex. She is said to be opposed to saerifieing herself on the altar of ehildhood, and to look with pitiful seorn on the mother of a half-dozen boys and girls. Whatever a man may do, this produet of *fin de siècle* faney is said to insist upon doing, setting her feet firmly down on the antiquated myths whieh onee obtained—the myth of the right of the weaker to proteetion by the stronger, of the adoration of the mother as the most blessed of all women on the earth, of the queenly dignity of her who rules the home and keeps alight the fire on the hearth.

Our question is where to find this personage so glibly deseribed and diseussed, but so elusive when she is sought? She is absent from our drawing-rooms, where to-day, as in former years, graeious matrons and faseinating maidens impart to soeiety the ease, the flavor, the sweetness whieh make the intereourse of well-bred people with one another equally reposeful and stimulating.

She is not to be discovered in the innumerable professions and trades which women have made their own, from the pulpit to the printing-office. The woman doctor, albeit an excellent physician, is as womanly as our mother Eve, and one seeks in vain for novelty in the woman professor, artist, minister, clerk, type-writer, journalist, or woman engaged in any vocation known to the utility of the hour. Purely womanly under the student's cap or gown, or under the frills and flutings of the beautifully arrayed débutante, our women of the hour are just what their mothers and grandmothers were — sincere, single-hearted, straightforward, impulsive, emotional, self-denying, lovable, tenderly loving beings. "God Almighty made them to match the men," and until he unmakes them they are unlikely to change in any very important particular.

The new woman has not yet been seen in the great farm land which lies beyond the cities, where in quiet neighborhoods, amidst serenities and silences, life keeps its tranquil pace. Nor is she visible in the beautiful Southern country, where women of gentle presence and soft manner and honeyed speech rule absolutely the realm into which they were born, the men of their families always their devoted knights and most courteous servitors.

Go where we will, the new woman exists prin-

cipally in the imagination; or if, perhaps, here and there a woman aspires to wearing the name, she finds it impossible to live up to it, surrendering at discretion the moment a genuine man falls in love with her. The adjective new will never be needed to indicate woman in her old rôles of bride at the altar, of mother cradling babe, of teacher in the school-room, of modiste fashioning a gown, or even of belle in society, or anything else winsome and queenly; for the woman we have always known satisfactorily fulfils all the demands made on womanhood in every relation here indicated.

XXXVII

THE MORAL EFFECT OF PRETTY GOWNS

I USE the word pretty rather than elegant, costly, or even tasteful, because pretty is exactly what I mean. One day at sunset I was on my way home, after hours of absence, and, with the pressure of desire to be beside my own hearth, felt little inclined to stop anywhere. But as I passed a neighbor's a girl I know tapped on the window and then ran to the door, throwing it open so that the light in the hall streamed out on the shadowy street.

"Come in, dear," cried my girl friend, coaxingly, "I have something to show you."

So in I went, and with real interest examined the lovely water-color, framed in carved white-wood and gold-leaf, which Fanny's friend, the young artist who is studying at the League in New York, had sent her for a birthday present. As I said, I know Fanny, who is one of my girls, and I know her John, and they both occupy a warm corner in my heart. One of these days

they are to be married, and I think they will be very happy, so congenial are their tastes and so generous are their sympathies.

What has all this to do with the moral effect of a pretty gown? More than you imagine.

Fanny's mother died five years ago, and Fanny has been mother as well as sister to three brothers, bright, sturdy little fellows, rapidly shooting up to tall, aggressive adolescence. Fanny has had a great deal on her shoulders, far too much for one so young, if Providence had not ordained it as her duty, and some time ago she began to feel that she had no time to spend on her dress.

"It is as much as I can do," she told me, "to slip into a wrapper in the morning and stay in it all day; I haven't time to put house dresses on, much less to make them, and then John never gets here before nine o'clock. When I expect him I make a toilette on purpose."

Meanwhile the boys have been growing unruly. They are bright, loving fellows, but the street is increasingly attractive to them. Of their father, a lawyer, absorbed in his profession and a recluse in his library when at home, they see little. It depends on Fanny to tide her brothers over the critical time when boyhood's bark slips over the bar into the sea of manhood.

Fanny and I put our heads together, and I

urged upon her the trial of personal charm as a home missionary effort. I begged her to discard her wrappers. They are garments fit only for one's dressing-room or for an invalid's leisure. "Let your brothers see you simply but prettily dressed every day, looking bright and neat and sweet, with little touches of adornment about your costume, and observe whether or not the effect will not be for good."

The effect was at once visible in the line of a certain toning-up of the whole house. It is not for nothing that the soldier in service is required to keep his uniform and accoutrements in perfect repair and in shining cleanliness. A profound truth lies under the strict requirements of military discipline, for he who is negligent of the less will inevitably slur the greater.

Fanny's simple gray cashmere, with its pink satin bows, made her more careful that her table should be attractively appointed as well as generously provided with viands; it made her intolerant of dust in the parlor, it sent her on a tour of inspection to the boys' rooms. She found, she could not explain how, that she had time enough for everything—time to go walking with her brothers, time to talk with them over school affairs and over the matches and games in which they took delight. The boys realized that they counted for a good deal in their sister's eyes,

that she thought it worth while to dress for them, and they were, therefore, on their best behavior.

You can fill out the story for yourselves. Perhaps some of you are at work in Sabbath-schools and working-girls' clubs and young people's reading-rooms. Do not make the mistake of supposing that there is any merit in going into these good works in a dowdy gown or an unbecoming hat. Try the effect of a pretty toilette; you will discover it to have far-reaching influence on the side of good morals.

XXXVIII

A FATHER'S WORK

He was a business man in the prime of life, a man with large enterprises on hand, ships at sea, and investments in diverse quarters. In his hand he held the converging threads of a great mercantile house, and on his judgment, matured by long exercise, on his integrity, assured by an unstained career, hundreds of other men depended for daily bread.

This man, talking with a friend one day lately, said with emphasis, pointing to a little fellow at play on the lawn: "There, God sparing me, is my principal work for the next ten years. Whatever else I have to do, it is secondary to the bringing up of my boy. Albert's education, not in books only, but in everything that constitutes true manhood, is, under God, in my hands, and," straightening himself up and taking off his hat reverently, he concluded, "I'll be true to my trust!"

Fathers are almost always very much occu-

pied by the bread-winning duties and obligations which naturally devolve upon them during the years when their children are growing up. A father often fancies that he has done his full share in the rearing of the family when he has provided the roof that shelters, the fuel that warms, the money that enables it to take a dignified place in society. Confident in his wife's ability to care for the children, he throws upon her a greater burden than she ought to carry, and leaves on the minds of the young people the impression of himself as a mere autocrat who occasionally interferes with their freedom, or a mere banker who pays the bills. In either case he is less to them than God meant him to be when He allowed him to assume the position of a father, and they are less to him than they would be if he took a more reasonable view of his privileges and felt more deeply his responsibilities. To a boy his father, often very much a stranger, alas! represents the type of man *he* means to be. If he hear his father in conversation with other men condone an act of dishonesty because it was successful, speak of an unscrupulous rogue as smart or clever, see him in his personal dealings overreach a trustful or fleece a helpless victim, the boy has taken a lesson in craft, guile, and duplicity which is branded in his very soul.

If boys and girls are left solely to their mother's training, they will probably be one-sided and unsymmetrical in character, lacking the element of virility in their education. Fathers and mothers are together influential in the home economy, and if the mother should be conscientious, alert, discreet, eagerly anxious for the children's welfare, and vigilant in her oversight, so should the father be. Of course there are widowed mothers, whose misfortune it is that they must stand alone. When the father is living he should bear his full part in child-training.

It may seem a little difficult for a father, on whose shoulders are heavy responsibilities to unbend sufficiently to make his boy a companion, yet as the boy, after all, is his most important investment, his dearest hostage to fortune, it is not asking too much of him that he bestow here a part of his thought and of his time. A father who plays baseball, swims, drives, walks, rides, and talks politics with his son, while the son is yet only a lad, is doing much to shape that lad's future. Such a father, if a Christian and a church member, will carry his son on the same current with himself. The boy will claim his birthright early. He will be a Christian as surely as he will be a Republican or a Democrat when he comes of age.

Indulgences coveted by boys chiefly because they are the prerogatives of grown men will not be desired by the boy whose father has kept him pace to pace with himself in play and in work and whose father is not a slave to any doubtful pleasure. True freedom in reference to any needless indulgence is the inheritance of sons whose fathers are themselves free.

Indirectly, the father's conduct shapes that of his sons and daughters, making them polite, deferential, and courteous in precisely the degree they have observed in him. It is all very well to say, in a perfunctory fashion, "Mind your mother, help your sister, be tender to weakness and gentle with the aged." The father need never say these things in words who invariably says them by example, who treats his wife as if she were a queen and anticipates her wishes with considerate and respectful care.

The father who has not forgotten his own boyhood can often assist his boy over hard places as no woman can. The lad feels confidence in the father's experience. There is an instinctive sympathy between the two—the brotherhood of sex as well as the relationship of parent and child. To protect his boy in purity, to arm him against temptation, to train him for God and for an honest and useful sphere in the work of the world, a father should deal with his son, not by delegated

authority, but by loving, steady influence exerted at first hand. A man is in good business who realizes that his principal work in life is the bringing up of the boy who will carry his name onward to the next generation.

XXXIX

MY BROTHER'S KEEPER

I WAS shocked to hear one day a good woman's exclamation over a shameful revelation of depravity in a youth who had been well brought up, "Oh, we cannot expect of a high-spirited boy the purity which we insist upon in a girl." I felt that with all the advances women have made in the direction of public speaking, of influence in school and other civic affairs, and in the higher education, they have yet much to learn if any considerable number of them accept this woman's sentiment as their own.

I cannot think that many women do. I am aware, however, that women sometimes dread the bringing-up of sons, as though sons were harder to train than daughters, and that it is a common belief that young men are exposed to greater temptations from without and are weaker within, and thus more ready to fall into sin, than are young women. Common as this notion may be, it is not based upon fact nor verified by ob-

servation. The Creator, who made men and women, and ordained that from babyhood they should grow up together in families as brothers and sisters under the shelter of the same roof-tree, did not apportion the fine gold to the feminine and the base dross to the masculine sex. In the cradle the wee boy is as pure and sweet a thing as the tiny girl. In childhood, John is as sensitive to outside associations, receiving or repelling the good or the evil as quickly as his sister. Grown to the period when youth's currents flow into and mingle with the swelling seas of manhood, the boy, if he have been rightly trained, is no more in peril, no likelier to be branded by the tempter and to enter upon a career of dissipation, than is the girl.

In her, too, the life forces struggle where the brook and river meet. But it is taken for granted that she will carry her whiteness unstained, and a lapse on her part is regarded with an unspeakable and unforgiving horror of surprise.

In the way of safeguards for young men, the first, and one of the most effectual, would be a public opinion precisely like that which holds a girl to purity and honor, which expects it, demands it of her, and will accept no substitute. That a young man should, in secret or openly, indulge in a course of life for which he must apologize, of which he would be ashamed before

his mother, his pastor, or the girl whom one of these days he will ask to be his wife, is one of those social blunders which approaches a crime. Society should frown on this in a way so universal as to bring about a change of front.

Another safeguard for a young man is one which should have been built up around him from birth. Fathers and mothers bring up their children. Neither can do it as well apart as both can do it together. A boy should be intimate with his father. Nothing in the father's thought should take precedence of the duty he owes to his son of cultivating a really close understanding with him. A man should not hold his boy at arm's length. The two, as the younger man grows up, should walk shoulder to shoulder, breast to breast, and they can do this only when confidence is the rule between them, a confidence which has grown up day by day during the years of immaturity.

It is a great mistake to suppose that mothers alone are responsible for the development into manly character of sons. If God take the father hence, the mother must do her best, with divine help, to take his place, but a boy needs both parents. On the part of both there should be constant vigilance without espionage, careful choice of schools and companions, careful supervision of reading, a great deal of liberty, but always

back of that liberty a strong and gentle authority. Reverence for law is a safeguard for the future man.

Healthy work, in proper proportion to play, is another safeguard. Do not make the mistake of giving the growing boy too much money. Let him earn what he spends, and hold him responsible for his allowance. Very early in life a delicate reverence for the body and the proper use of it may be instilled into a boy, and no indelicacy of word or act should pass without grave rebuke. The atmosphere around a boy should be free from moral malaria. Let him cultivate bodily strength and engage freely in healthful outdoor sports. Athletics are likely to be the physical salvation of the boys of this period. Equally they are helping young women, and the daily mingling of the sexes in wheeling, golfing, and other sports is a blessed thing for all.

We arrive now at a point more difficult to treat. How shall a young girl in society signify her abhorrence of evil courses, of which she is supposed to be ignorant? If a girl's own soul is a temple swept and garnished, and a room in which there is the presence of the indwelling Christ, her refinement and purity will make themselves evident without direct effort on her side. She will not be called upon to speak. In her company young men will be challenged, as

by an invisible angel with a drawn sword, to be worthy.

If, however, through meretrieious reading, or talk with silly young women who have low standards, the girl invests the "wild" young fellow with heroic attributes to whieh he ean lay no elaim, if she accepts his pinehbeck gallantry for pure gold, she is doing mueh to push him downward. Enlisted with women whose garments she would seorn to toueh, she is depriving the youth of a hallowed safeguard by showing him that she tolerates sin, and deems the wilful sinner more manly than the self-denying soul who is afraid to offend God.

In the Name that is above every name, I call upon girls everywhere to think, before they ineur so great a responsibility as this in pure heedlessness.

XL

CONVALESCENCE

THE slow climbing back to health and strength after an illness is not unlike the progress one makes in mounting a very steep and stony hill.

A few steps forward and then a slip back, and extra effort needed to make up for what one has lost. You lie in your room, weak, suffering, exhausted from pain, and worried over trifles. It seems impossible that the household affairs should move on without your hand at the helm, and visions come to you of waste and disorder, and meals delayed, and children neglected, until your old ache comes back, and there is a little rise of fever, and you are worse instead of better.

When you were very ill, perhaps tarrying in the shadow of death, you took no note of the passage of time. Ways and means did not concern you. The good man of the house, ordinarily so much on your mind, was left to the care of the rest of the family. If his meals were not just as he liked them, if buttons were missing,

or clothing not properly repaired, it was nothing to you. For once, the children were not in your thought, and Willie, Jeanie, and Frank played or went to school, quarrelled, studied, did as they chose, with no interference or oversight of their mother's.

Those were forlorn days in the family, when everybody was anxious and troubled. But they passed by. You turned the corner for recovery, and now you are getting well, not very rapidly, but still making progress. If only you could keep from distressing yourself needlessly! If only you could exercise faith and believe that all is going well! For convalescence will not be hurried; you have to sit still and wait, and the greater your patience and quietness, the speedier is the return of your strength.

Sometimes there is a very sweet message for you in your little every-day text-book. You open it at the place marked by the ribbon, to the date of day and month, and this is what God has for you, your portion of manna sent from His own hand: "We know that all things work together for good to them that love God," with such a stanza as this from Faber:

> "Ill that He blesses is our good,
> And unblessed good is ill,
> And all is right that seems most wrong,
> If it be His sweet will."

Or this may be the King's word to your soul, "Blessed is the man that maketh the Lord his trust," with Miss Havergal's little bit of melody:

"Just to let thy Father do
What He will.
Just to know that He is true,
And be still;
Just to trust Him, this is all;
Then the day will surely be
Peaceful, whatsoe'er befall,
Bright and blessed, calm and free."

There are people who prefer reading their Bibles, as a whole, caring very little for fragmentary books of devotion; but when we are weak in body and mentally enfeebled because of the body's weakness, then the wee bit morsel is easier to assimilate than the slice from the great loaf. Not that the single text should take the place of the chapter or the quotation satisfy when there is time and strength for the whole passage; but the little text-books are comforts, and are like the child's piece between meals: they sustain the strength for a while.

The convalescent must be content to creep back to strength. One of these days, especially if youth be on your side, you will find the shackles suddenly loosed, and your old freedom again bestowed upon you, the time of illness will

recede till it seems but the memory of a dream, and you will probably be the better for the rest it afforded to your overwrought frame. Very busy people often rest in no other way so thoroughly as when illness lays its imperative hand on toiling brain and limbs, and enforces repose.

The friends of the convalescent must make allowances for the irritability and nervousness which make the patient impatient to the verge of unreason. Nerves which are normal often fail to comprehend the discomfort produced by little things when nerves are bare to the edge. The drawing of a needle through cloth, the scratching of a pen, above all, the rattling of newspapers or the creaking of shoes, drive a nervous invalid to a pitch which approximates the frantic, though the person in health does not even observe them. To be patient with a person at death's door is easy. To be equally patient with one who is fretfully and querulously coming back to life is often harder.

Blessings on men. The generous love, the unstinted tenderness, the resolute patience of men, can never be praised enough. Scott's famous lines—

> "O woman! in our hours of ease,
> Uncertain, coy, and hard to please, . . .
> When pain and anguish wring the brow,
> A ministering angel thou!"—

are all very well and very true, but Browning strikes as true a note in "Time's Revenges":

"I've a friend, over the sea,
I like him, but he loves me.—
—And if some vein
Were to snap to-night in this heavy brain,
To-morrow month, if I lived to try,
Round should I just turn quietly,
Or, out of the bed-clothes stretch my hand,
Till I found him, come from his foreign land,
To be my nurse in this poor place,
And make my broth and wash my face,
And light my fire, and all the while
Bear with his old good-humored smile,
That I told him, 'Better have kept away
Than come and kill me, night and day,
With, worse than fever throbs and shoots,
The creaking of his clumsy boots.'"

Blessings on the strength and the goodness, the loving-kindness of fathers, brothers, and husbands. No wonder the crying baby is soothed and stilled, when it cuddles up against the warm breast, is encircled in the strong arm of its father. Men, as a rule, are less at the mercy of their nerves than women are. They are organized for rougher service, they do not carry about heads and stomachs which are upset by every jar. Consequently they make splendid nurses, and many an ailing wife invokes a benediction daily on the faithful, considerate, and never-failing love of her

husband, a love that is armor of proof against her petulance, and a shield for her in every hour of need.

In a little book, which has recently been widely read, "Ships that Pass in the Night," there is a chapter full of suggestion for those who look after the sick: "The doctors in Petershof always said that the care-takers of the invalids were a much greater anxiety than the invalids themselves. They either fussed about too much, or they did not fuss about at all. They all began by doing the right thing; they all ended by doing the wrong. The fussy ones had fits of apathy when the poor, irritable patients seemed to get a little better; the negligent ones had paroxysms of attentiveness when their invalids, accustomed to loneliness and neglect, seemed to become rather worse by being worried."

To do enough, but not to be superfluous in attention, to have endless patience and constant cheerfulness, are requisites of the ideal nurse. Nobody can be expected to be the ideal invalid.

XLI

A GOLDEN MILE-STONE

"As the days of a tree are the days of my people." An eloquent speaker commenting on this beautiful simile at a significant and joyful anniversary occasion, pursued the analogy further, and compared the life of a church, a local church, to the growth of a tree. As the tree, the church sent out its vital shoots, branches for shade and for shelter, put forth blossoms in their season and fruit in the time thereof; afforded homes to the singing birds, guarded the household eaves, made beautiful the highway and the forest, battled with the storms, aspired ever heavenward. How lovely the thought, "as the days of a tree!"

It was the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of a church in a city near New York—its golden mile-stone. I had known the church long and loved it well. In my girlhood my name had been on its membership roll, and its pastor had been mine. Those dearest to me on earth had worshipped at its altars, and a certain pew on one of

its aisles is the sacred spot where I can still shut my eyes and behold my mother's face as she sat, year by year, looking up to God and listening to His servant as he spoke the words of life.

With the history of the church I had been always familiar, knowing the crises through which it had passed, knowing it for its fidelity to its creed, rejoicing at its steady showing of its colors, its onward march. In 1844, on April 19th, a few people gathered to organize it in the hall of a public school, which still stands opposite its present substantial and commodious building. The church has long been free from debt, beautified by the loving hands of its members, and is itself the rallying-place of a great multitude of tender and hallowed associations.

The fifty years between 1844 and 1894 were wonderful years in the world's progress and in the development of Christian institutions. Years of inventions, discoveries, political changes, of the marching on of God's kingdom. They have seen the little village where this church was founded broaden out into a great city. They have witnessed the downfall of slavery and the cementing of our States into a more permanent union, the upbuilding of our nation after the elemental strifes of our Civil War, the binding of the whole world by the ocean cables which

carry messages around the globe. Wonderful fifty years!

In the half-century this church has had but two pastors, one for ten, the other, still hale and vigorous, for forty years. A venerable and benignant man, with hair and beard as white as snow, form erect and stately, eye undimmed, voice clear and resonant, the church has reason to be proud of its senior pastor. A few years ago it called to his and its assistance a colleague in pulpit and pastoral work, the pastor's son, and the two, in perfect accord, carry forward the several enterprises of the church.

How wise for every congregation able to do so, to have more than one officiating minister. The work of any church, however obscure or small, is an immense burden to be laid on one man, when there is taken into account the parish visiting, the ministration to the sick, the poor, the bereaved, and the perplexed, the funerals, the many meetings, the sermons, and prayer-meeting talks. The most efficient and prosperous churches are those in which this great work is divided, and which do the more and the greater work because there are more than one wearied clergyman to carry it on.

The services of praise in connection with this church jubilee were spread over the space of a week, and were reminiscent, inspiring, and evan-

gelistic. Papers were read, written by former and present members of the church, and greetings and letters, really love-letters, came from the West and the South, from those who longed to be there, but were prevented by Providential reasons.

On the Sabbath morning succeeding the evening of which mention has been made, the older pastor preached from the words of the Lord to Moses: "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward."

In the course of the sermon one remark was made with emphasis, and it deserves to be repeated in print. During the long connection as pastor and people, the pastor said that never for one day, nor one hour, had there been the least delay in the payment of the pastor's salary. Not once in forty years had the church suffered its pastor to feel a passing solicitude as to his income. It had been their custom to pay the salary, invariably and punctually, the moment it was due.

There are churches of which this cannot be said, churches which do not blush to let their pastor's salary fall into arrears, and which pay it grudgingly at last. Nor are such churches less exacting than others, in that which they demand of their minister.

A communion service on the Sunday afternoon packed the old church galleries and floor with

communicants. Back to the mother Church with their pastors came representatives of the four flourishing churches which had gone forth in colonies, each of which has its building free from indebtedness, and its manifold agencies for good.

One of the pleasantest experiences of the week was the reunion from time to time of those who had been long and widely separated. Old friends clasped cordial hands again, recognizing each other by some occult process, since often the years had transformed blooming youth into grave middle age, or made strong men and women in their prime feeble and aged. For as William Morris observes, the years are always going on silently, and among them they bring the eld.

It was a happy occasion this anniversary, and one to be remembered long. How hallowed is the life of a church! What a centre of sacred influences! What a blessing to the community in which it is set, like a beacon! How far *this* candle sheds its light! Only heaven itself can tell the story or keep the record of what one Christian church may do for men. The record is verily kept in the Lamb's book of life.

XLII

THE RISING GENERATION

THE rising generation! It is an object of unfailing interest to the two generations which immediately precede and exist simultaneously with and for it. To the generation which stands to the rising one, in direct order of parenthood, it is, of course, the most important thing on earth. To the second generation back of it, its grandparents and the greatest admirers of its marvellous developments, the rising generation is an object of pride and complacency.

In other words, the children, God bless them, occupy the largest share of the world's attention. For them men toil unceasingly, live self-denyingly, hope continually. Homes centre about the children. Fathers and mothers have one end in view, one supreme end, and that is the bringing up of their children to take their places, honorably and successfully, when they have finished their course and gone higher.

All the vast machinery of our school systems,

public and private, our academies and colleges, and our various professional institutions, has been called into operation and is kept at work for the benefit of the rising generation. To train these boys and girls so that they may make the most of themselves and of their opportunities is held to be the sacred obligation of the State, as well as of every individual.

It is a matter of course that every rising generation in its turn is the victim of blunders, and suffers more or less from the misplaced indulgence or the needless rigidity of those who are responsible for its growth and its instruction.

Looking over the wide field of the world one's heart aches at the misery, oppression, and suffering which little children and young people are forced to endure. Child labor in factories, child labor in tenements, where little ones of tender years are forced, too early, to undertake tasks beyond their strength, child slavery, as practised virtually by those who make money from the gifts and accomplishments of children—these make a sum of agony which cries to Heaven for relief and for vengeance.

Apart from special forms of bondage and hard work which fall on helpless childhood through the poverty or the greed of the men and women who control it, a great deal of needless trouble is the portion of children because grown-up people

do not understand them. Accusations, for example, of falsehood are brought unjustly upon sensitive little hearts because of the difference of vocabulary. Imagination is very vivid in the case of children, and their statements are colored by their own fancies, when no untruth is intended. Along comes a big, well-meaning blunderer of a father or mother, who, by a cruel doubt, gives the child its first knowledge that there are lies in the world. Few adults remember the passionate joy, the intense pain, the Eden brightness, the occasional woe, which were their portion in childhood. And so they are harsh when they ought to be forbearing, punish when to punish is a crime against the defenceless, and plume themselves on their discipline when they ought to bemoan their own stupidity in sackcloth.

On the other hand, the rising generation is often endangered by too great liberty. The sons of the very rich, or of the moderately well-to-do, are given too much money to spend, and too little responsibility is laid upon them. The blessedness of work, in the right degree, cannot be overestimated, and some parents, having borne the burden in their own day, are foolishly ready to spare their children every trial. Such parents might take lessons from our little neighbors, the birds. These "little brothers of the air" cud-

dle their baby broods, wait on them from morning until night, feed them incessantly, hover over and defend them; but when the time comes for them to fly, who so relentness as the father bird, who so resolved as the mother? They appear to know that the younglings must try their own strength, and they insist on their doing so, even if the baby birds fall and are hurt.

The rising generation has a right to the most positive Christian training which it can receive. Perhaps the great fault and the weakest point of our education in this country and at this period is a deficiency at this vital place. We cram with tidbits of science, with facts and dates and syntax and etymology, but we forget that with their mother's milk children should be indoctrinated in honesty, in purity, and in the fear of God. Whatever else may be left in abeyance, it is unsafe and insane to leave the question of a religious education to accident. Children should be taught to observe the Sabbath, to obey God's law, to read the Bible, to look up in every circumstance to One who is a strong habitation for the righteous.

This is the best inheritance to which the rising generation can attain.

XLIII

LOVE IN DOMESTIC LIFE

Love is supposed to be the one foundation necessary for the firm building up of domestic happiness. The question arises, is this true?

Years ago the writer knew a man and a woman who made a love-match. They were deeply, entirely, faithfully in love with one another, and during a score of years of wedded life they so remained. But there was neither peace nor comfort in their domicile. The wife neither knew nor cared to learn how to make the most of their modest income. Debt was hung around her husband's neck till it weighed him to the earth. He felt like a felon, dragging a ball and chain. While himself a man of strict integrity and fastidious refinement, he was often forced to dodge round corners, like the renowned Dick Swiveller, in order to elude duns and creditors. When he returned home from the office, weary and spent, he often had personally to cook the dinner, and he always had to cut out the children's frocks

and help make them. This is not a fancy, but is an ower-true sketch.

Yet never in the twenty years did he cease to love the pretty peach-blossom creature he had married. Faded and washed out, she was always beautiful in his loyal eyes. And never for one instant, though she fretted, and cried, and spoiled dinners, and could not sew, and ran up bills for him to pay, did she cease to love him. On her death-bed she murmured, "You have been as good as an angel, John!"

It was not an exaggerated statement. An angel could have been no more patient, no more gentle, no more tender and kind.

In due course John found another mate. She was a middle-aged widow, a woman with faculty. She could manage affairs; her dinners were perfect; her husband's life was a dream of commonplace, material comfort. He prospered exceedingly under her régime, and was "known in the gates, among the elders of the land." Nobody seeing the well-dressed, well-brushed, well-fed gentleman, and remembering his former experience, could avoid a mental congratulation of him.

Yet he never "loved" Joan, and he mourned Esther till the last hour of his life. Who can explain this problem? Love must be the all in all, after all.

XLIV

A FIELD FOR CLEVER WOMEN

"I OFTEN wonder," said a friend, "that some quick-witted, deft-handed woman does not set herself up in business as a maker-over of old clothes. Many ladies can do this to perfection in their own families, and they cut down, turn, twist, cleanse, repair, and combine old garments with bits of new material until the result equals the first state of the gown or wrap, possibly surpasses it. One of my friends says that *her* black silks never really wear out, because she has a new waist made, or another pair of sleeves, or puts a new breadth in the front, or the back, or the sides, and the gown starts triumphantly upon a new career. My gowns, on the contrary," the lady went on to explain, "are worn straight out—from resplendent newness to threadbare shabbiness. Alas! the descent is easy, and I have never yet found a person who would, for liberal payment, make them over. I do not wish to plan or bother about them myself, but I hate to throw

aside a dress which might have a new lease of usefulness were it properly reconstructed."

Sympathizing heartily with this friend, we suggest that there must be women waiting for this profession, as it undoubtedly waits for them.

XLV

THE BURDEN OF THE GRASSHOPPER

It is a pathetic little simile, that old one, of the grasshopper being a burden. That so small and so light a thing can really overweigh any one is a problem which youth and health cannot solve. Indeed, it is only when the grasshopper has really become a burden that people begin to understand what it means.

One of the signs of advancing years is in the inability to bear trifling discouragements with composure, to meet disappointments with fortitude, and to have patience with little things which are annoying. When we find ourselves thrown off our balance by some very small affair, when mole-hills assume the proportion of mountains in our eyes, then we may know that we are really growing older—not old, perhaps, but older. Another sign which is almost infallible is to be recognized by those who find themselves becoming constantly reminiscent. We know that it is often said of extremely old people that they remember

perfectly well what happened in their childhood, but that the affairs of the present do not seem to impress their minds; so that when any one of us discovers that she is living very largely in the past, that she is constantly remembering what took place when she was a girl, that she takes more pleasure in thinking of what used to be than what is now, she may be on guard lest she is nearing the period when the grasshopper shall become a burden.

So, too, when one becomes impatient with the point of view of younger people, falling into the habit of criticising those who are young, being out of touch with the generation that is coming to the front, she may then infer that she herself belongs to an older period.

There is no reason why any one should be distressed at the mere fact of growing old. Every age has its advantages and its pleasures. The maturity of experience is at least worth as much as the brightness and promise of youth, just as the ripe fruit is more to be desired than that which hangs crude and green upon the tree. But it is a pity when older people take upon themselves the rôle of wet blankets, or are so difficult that people cannot get on with them. To be exacting, disagreeable, and fault-finding is bad enough in young people, but it is simply intolerable in the old.

Elderly people should be careful not to be queer and odd, not to allow themselves to behave in so eccentric a manner that people are tempted to call them "cranks." The word is slangy, but descriptive. Old people should be careful about their personal appearance. In dress and in demeanor they should cultivate that which is attractive. A pretty girl, though she seldom knows it, is pretty and sweet in herself merely by virtue of her youth. She can get on with the plainest possible sort of gown. She would be charming if she never wore anything more expensive than calico. But an older woman should have the costly raiment, the pronounced elegance, velvets, silks, sheer muslins, and every sort of daintiness that she can afford.

There is a passage in a recent novel which touchingly describes the first moment in which a woman who has been extremely beautiful and very much courted all her life awakes to the fact that her youth is gone. It is in a drawing-room after dinner, and she is tired, having had a very trying day. She is conversing with an artist who is deficient in politeness, and who suffers his preoccupation to make him negligent of his hostess. The artist is wholly engrossed with the beautiful young daughter of the house, and his attention wanders constantly from the mother. The mother has always been accus-

tomed to surpass the daughter, and she cannot understand how it is that her sceptre seems to be departing. Suddenly she catches sight of herself in the glass, and it comes over her with the force of a torrent that her beautiful complexion has become faded and sallow, that crow's-feet surround her eyes, that the gold has gone out of her hair — that she has, without being aware of it, grown old. It is a moment of acute pain and heartache.

Some of us remember the first time that anybody gave us special consideration on the ground that we needed it because we were not young any more. Few of us have the philosophy to be pleased when a younger person offers a courtesy on the ground that we are not strong enough to be treated as though we were young. This is why elderly gentlemen insist on waiting on themselves, and disclaim the attention that would have saved them a trip up a flight of stairs, or would hand them a cane or a coat. This is why a gray-haired woman wishes that a girl, in offering her a seat in a cable-car, would not add, "I cannot let anybody stand who is so much older than I."

The only way in which people can be happy as they are growing old is by frankly accepting the ground on which they stand, and making up their minds that they will enjoy the privileges and im-

munities of the situation. These are not few. If a person going on in life has kept health and strength, there is no reason why she should not have a much better time during the last twenty years of her career than she had during the first. She may go where she chooses unchallenged. She may engage in any work that pleases her. She is in sympathy with people of every age and of every grade of culture, and if she be lovable everybody will love her.

XLVI

THE CARE OF THE CARE-TAKER

A GREAT deal of sympathy is very properly felt and expressed in relation to those who are ill. The sufferer shut into the narrow confines of her room or her couch, and compelled to forego the pleasant activities of life, her days dragging on slowly and monotonously, is the object of our pity, and claims all the gentle attention that love and tenderness can give.

But it is also a question whether pity should not be bestowed upon those who are well, and who are compelled by the voices, both of duty and inclination, to take up the continual burden of caring for the sick. We are not here thinking of those occasional periods which come into families, when the illness of one or two or, perhaps, three at a time taxes the courage and patience and skill of those who are well, but rather of households in which one person, an invalid, lingers on month after month, and year after year, while those around her are taxed to the utmost in unceasing care.

The dilemma is undoubtedly a difficult one. It would be heartless to the utmost degree to neglect the one who is suffering, to be irritable and impatient with the querulousness and irritability which are the result of pain. Pain and weakness long endured sometimes have the effect of rendering the mind feeble, in a measure, and invalids often become exacting and indiscreet without their suspecting it, and, indeed, without their being in the least to blame.

It is often easy for people outside such a home to blame those who are charged with the invalid's care for what seems to the outsiders a lack of gentle consideration. These critics think that the invalid is not always treated with the tenderness and forbearance which her condition should enlist. They say, in effect, "If we were in that place, and charged with that duty, we would bear ourselves differently; no kindness, no self-denial, no sacrifice would be too great for us." At the same time they have not been tried, and they do not know how difficult it may be to maintain zealous and almost angelic patience at concert pitch during months and years.

So far as possible, those who are well in a house where there is a chronic invalid should try to maintain their own health by every possible means. Again and again have we seen the nervous, suffering invalid absolutely wear out

and outlive several strong people; sometimes a daughter dying years before the suffering mother, sometimes a sister, who is apparently perfectly well, fading like a flower, while the invalid herself survives and lingers on chained to her lounge or her room.

It is not selfish; it is, on the contrary, an evidence of unselfish wisdom which is shown when the person who is care-taker and nurse looks out for her own health and strength. When it is possible, she should insist on having some one relieve her of part of her cares. The excuse often is: "S—— or J—— will have nobody else near her; nobody can give her the comfort that I can; she will take her medicine, or have her pillows changed, or listen to reading only when I am there myself." This may be so, but a little tactful and persevering determination will change it without injury to the invalid.

The care-taker must have rest, and that not in the room with the invalid. She should have fresh air and pleasant society, and now and then a little change and relaxation. It must not be forgotten that the chronic invalid after a while becomes, in a way, accustomed to the pain which was at first so hard to bear, and that it loses, to some extent, its keen-edged power to hurt. Naturally, with so few interests, the invalid's mind

settles on itself and its general misfortune, and the first thing she thinks of is her own comfort and ease. No one should reproach her for this; but, on the other hand, if there be no one at hand to look out for the interests of the person who is well, but who may any day be ill, she should look out for them herself.

XLVII

COMMUNION

We sometimes fancy, in this hurrying and tumultuous age of ours, that no preceding age has been so full of temptations to materialism, so bristling with difficulties which war against the better life. But this is a mistake. The most cursory glance at history shows human nature in every century very much the same; reveals, as the smoke rolls away, the world-old battles between sin and righteousness forever going on.

Our age, with which we are more immediately concerned than with any that has preceded it, affords problems enough for our powers of solution. Certainly, we are aware of a subtle feeling in the atmosphere that drags us away from the spiritual, and strongly inclines us to lower levels. In the fierce competitions of business, in the multiplication of cares, in the complexity of life, as opposed to a former simplicity, we find ourselves with little time for meditation, for introspection, and for looking up.

There is even in some sincere Christians a sort of revolt against prayer. "Why waste time and breath," they exclaim, "in petitions to God, when the cry ought rather to be to ourselves to be up and doing?" They are impatient of the hour spent in the closet, with the door shut and the world in the distance. The world beats so relentlessly against their closet that the door is always at least ajar, and often flies open. Neither public meeting nor secret prayer is pleasing to Christians of this type; they are satisfied only to be at what they consider work.

There must be both types, no doubt, in every church, and God sees the prayer that is expressed in action as well as the prayer that is told in speech, and answers both in His own way. But, more than all, it is necessary to our soul's growth that we keep fast hold of the great truth that both in prayer and in work we must be consciously at one with God. We must have faith in *Him*, not merely belief in ourselves.

"What difference does it make?" I heard a good pastor say the other day, alluding to a situation which was embarrassing and full of discouragement. "The Master knows all about it. *We* have nothing to do except to trust Him, and go straight forward." The words were as childlike and simple as those of the little one at home or in school who has nothing to do except to

trust and obey. Could we live all the while with the blessed *realized* sense that God is working with us, that our cares and troubles are known to Him, and sent by Him, it would be as much a part of our daily life to pray as to breathe. Prayer would be involuntary, and it would enter into our work and vitalize it, and supply a motive power, as steam for machinery.

More important than all is this divine life in the soul, this union with the Beloved One. Let us seek it in our secret prayers, in the sanctuary, and, as well, in the daily routine of our households and offices, and wherever God has appointed our tasks.

It is possible that a certain impatience with the devotional side of piety has naturally followed upon a great and increasing interest in practical philanthropy. We are ready to wash the saints' feet, if need be, to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry. These seem kind and practical actions, requiring energy and self-denial. They occupy time to present advantage with tangible results.

But in "an age which is rapidly losing the consciousness of sin," which is far too willing to "condone the wrong which is yet unconquered," we do not at once sympathize with the weakness which can gain strength only from a prolonged vigil, a wrestle with the angel of God, which

clamors imperatively, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me."

May we not well consider whether we shall not gain much by sitting oftener at the Master's feet, and by cultivating the habit of communion with God? Communion includes prayer, but is itself something higher and sweeter; it is petition with the sense of answer, merged in complete submission to the will of God, all-knowing, all-loving, all-directing.

XLVIII

POLITENESS

A CHARM of social intercourse is found in that sweet deference of manner which is rarer than it ought to be. We are so occupied with affairs, or we are so wrought upon by the spirit of the period, that, older or younger, we are too prone to forget the gentle courtesy, the reverence for the rights and opinions of our associates, which eases the machinery of daily life, and makes family intercourse agreeable and delightful.

Youth is naturally aggressive. It has the world before it. Its impulse is to sweep aside every barrier of caution and to push opposition out of its way. Impetuous and in haste to reach its goal, which has not yet begun to recede in the mists and fogs of hope deferred, it cannot brook the smallest obstacle. This very quality of the imperious and irresistible, which in its excess is disastrous to pleasant social relations, helps to make the young successful in leader-

ship, and enables them to carry the banners of conquest in whatever they undertake.

But the quality has its reverse side. When a girl, a loving and candid and sweet-natured girl, openly contradicts her mother in a conversation; when a young man vehemently and discourteously expresses his difference of opinion from one much older; when, in short, brusqueness and absolute rudeness color the manner of really excellent young people, it is time for an interrogation and a pause.

We think a great deal in these days about "good form." Conventionalities are rightfully regarded as appropriate hedges, which the well-bred guard sedulously, their limitations and their dictates being manifestly founded in good feeling and the outgrowth of common-sense. But with all this there is a danger that the truth at the heart of things may be ignored while so much care is maintained about externals. *One* external, an air of thoughtful consideration for those with whom we are in personal and daily contact and intercourse, cannot be too highly prized.

How winning it is, this grace of deference! In an elderly woman or man, one polished by long acquaintance with the best usages of society, it is a fascinating courtliness. We say this is a lady or a gentleman of the old school, im-

plying by our use of the phrase that the new school may even now sit at the feet of the old and acquire some valuable information. In a young person this well-bred politeness, which knows self-restraint, which refrains from interruptions and violent disclaimers and unnecessary superlatives, and takes time to show its sincerity and kindliness in acts and words of thoughtful and tender attention, is a grace which outranks beauty and throws the highest talent into the shade.

Many thoroughly admirable people need to take themselves in hand because they have underrated the importance of good manners in daily life. Here is your field and mine, friends, at our own tables, in the sitting-room when we gather around the evening lamp, on the porch, or wherever we happen to be. It were well for some of us to impose on our dispositions and our too-ready tongues the discipline of a silent but military drill.

To be considerate is to be charming, winsome, and attractive. For daily guidance in this and in some kindred matters there is no better rule than an old one written in an old book—"In honor preferring one another."

We have careful thought for the stranger,
And smiles for the sometime guest,

But oft for our own the bitter tone,
Though we love our own the best.
Ah! lip with the curve impatient,
Ah! brow with the look of scorn,
'Twere a cruel fate were the night too late
To undo the work of morn.

XLIX

THE UNREST OF OUR GIRLS

WHENCE comes the prevalent unrest of girlhood? That it exists no thoughtful observer can fail to perceive—a phase in the life of the modern girl alike irritating to herself and puzzling to her parents. We older people, who regard the young from the somewhat higher plane reached by much stumbling and climbing, remember our own struggles, and are yet aware of a difference in kind and in degree. It is impossible not to be intensely interested in the end-of-the-century girl, a delightful creature, fascinating, lovable, ambitious, sure of herself, impatient of restraint, eager for individual work, and straining against the curb of sex limitations. She probably has as much conscience and as much sincere piety as her predecessor of a hundred years ago—she who wrote down in diaries never meant for naked type her exaggerated repentances and saintly aspirations. The other girl had a narrower sphere, but she was more

contented in its daily round than is her granddaughter, all ferment and effervescence, crying out to enter the lists like a man, and demanding only a fair field and no favor.

Our girls—let me add that I am not speaking of those who *must* become bread-winners away from home, but of a large number to whom home offers the best and nearest opportunity for effort—are singularly impatient of what they deem household restrictions. Not impatient only, but also often amazingly blind. I know girls who long to go forth from the familiar home threshold that they may become something in their point of view more important than just that dear and precious being, a daughter at home. To be a journalist, bidden here and bidden there by an inexorable and exacting profession; to be a trained nurse, caring for the sick in hospitals; to be a foreign missionary, speeding over the seas to do Christ's work in Africa or India; to be an elocutionist, interpreting the obscurities of poetry and the subtleties of dialect to admiring crowds—these are the beckoning careers which allure our young sisters and make simple domestic life by contrast insipid and uninviting.

Yet, could they but see with clear vision the girl who stays with a delicate mother, lifting her burdens and smoothing her path; the girl who coaches her younger brother and fits him for col-

lege; the girl who makes desserts and mends stockings and teaches her Sunday-school class after thorough and prayerful preparation; the girl whom a good man woos and wins; the girl who marries and becomes a sweet wife and a tender mother; just the plain, old-fashioned, never-out-of-fashion girl who cares more for *being* good than for doing great things — this, and not the other, is the fortunate and the enviable girl.

The defect of our period is our incessant clamor for the utilities. Why is such a one studying this art, that science? What is she going to do with it? we ask. And there is a lurking sense of disapproval in many minds when they learn that the thorough education is not in the line of a direct investment, sure to return an immediate and quite disproportionate interest.

My own feeling is strongly against the tendency which urges young women needlessly into the crowded ranks of the wage-earning. When duty points there the girl simply obeys, without conflict, without unrest. It is when duty points, as it often does, plainly in the opposite direction that the agitation begins. The finely educated young woman with work lying at her hand in her father's house, in her own town, her own church, is not attracted by this, but beats against the bars like a caged bird, because she cannot, as

she thinks, develop as God meant her to along the lines of her own choosing.

To such a girl I long to say, in all loving-kindness, "When God has work for you outside and beyond the present, he will set wide the door. Wait, dear child. The waiting is itself a preparation. Fill each day in the meantime with sunny helpfulness, with cheery attention to your loved ones, with simple, gentle, womanly occupations well done. So will you discover the secret of peace and take to heart this thought, that all things below are relatively important, and that from the point of view of the angels she who sets the home table three times a day is as admirable as she who in any way ministers to the larger public away from home."

L

THE TOILET OF THE SOUL

In these days a great deal of attention is paid to the cultivation of physical grace and attractiveness of face and figure. Intelligent people have gradually arrived at the conclusion that what a clever woman calls the "duty of beauty" is a matter of health, of bathing, of diet, of dress, of air and exercise, of sleep and of a serene mind. Much more space than formerly is given in periodical literature to this single department, and women old and young are taught the open secrets of keeping themselves fair and fresh amid the thronging occupations of life. The word "massage," for instance, was practically unknown to our grandmothers, who accepted wrinkles and loss of complexion with perfect composure, supposing that to "fade as a leaf" was a necessity of advancing years. Those excellent women would have thought it sheer waste of time and a snare of the evil one to manipulate their shrivelling skins with unguents and to wash

cheeks and eyes according to rule with a view to the preservation of dimples and the demolition of crow's-feet.

But the question arises in the thoughtful mind, and cannot be carelessly turned aside, Are we as heedful concerning the toilet of the soul as of the body? It must be conceded that comparatively few of us in the prevailing activity of our lives have leisure for that meditative and tranquil order of mental exercise in which the spiritual nature is fed as the flowers absorb the dew.

A certain definite daily period of time for devotional reading was once quite generally esteemed an essential in religious growth, and I remember the little home sanctuaries of dear friends where they entered into their closets and shut the doors to pray, to study the Bible, and to cull the thoughts of Baxter, Doddridge, Bunyan, and other good men. To have fed thriftily on a single text, a single stanza, a single devout aspiration in some little manual every morning and evening would not have satisfied these longing souls. Their religion was introspective and individual, and they emerged from their hours of mystical communion with faces glowing with a sacred light.

Phillips Brooks, in a wonderful All-Saints' Day sermon, says of the help inherent in the thought that the church in heaven and on earth

is one: "Ever from out the past, from the old saints who lived in other times, from Enoch, David, Paul and John, Augustine, Jerome, Luther, Leighton, there comes down the power of God to us. Because they were full of it, we, by association with them, grow fuller of it than we could be by ourselves. Our faith mounts up with their exultant prayers. Our weak devotion, tired and drooping, rests against the strong pillars of their certain trust. Their quick sight teaches our half-opened eyes the way to look towards the light that shall unseal them wholly."

No one who has considered the subject as sufficiently important to at least *try* to maintain a habit of religious reading for three or four consecutive months will fail to admit that there is great comfort and advantage in thus daily making the toilet of the soul. Apart from the strength derived from prayer when it is free and unhurried, there is a consciousness of added resource, a sense of something in reserve, which comes to us as we read the Bible with earnest diligence, and as we study works which have the Bible directly or indirectly as their inspiration. It is a good plan to keep always at hand a volume of some reach and grasp for regular perusal, as, for example, Dr. Thomson's "Christ in the Old Testament," Dr. Stalker's "Imago Christi," or Dr. Storrs's delightful "Bernard of Clair-

vaux." I have lately read with peculiar sympathy those fragrant pages penned by the lamented Lucy Larcom. The "Unseen Friend" and "As It Is in Heaven" are books to lift one into a diviner atmosphere.

There is so much to do, there are so many whom we ought to aid, and the urgent need of doing at once whatever the hands find waiting is so pressing, that it is well for us to recall, as a shield against materialism, our Lord's injunction to "watch and pray." We shall not waste time in which we simply sit at the Master's feet.

LI

RIGHT LIVING ON A WRONG PLANE

At the first glance it seems as if here is a manifest contradiction in terms, for how can one live rightly on any plane but the best? Yet, when we look about us, we are fain to confess that there is such a thing as living honestly, honorably, and even beautifully, and still failing to give and to get that which makes the fulness and the sweetness of life. There may be right living, yet the living may be on a low level. There may be no breaking of law, yet the law of the highest love may be ignored. There may be much keeping of the Commandments and a missing of the spiritual atmosphere which is beyond the written word.

A young wife goes to her new home, her hand in that of her "good man," the husband she has chosen; she out of the whole world is sought and found, to be the loadstar of his future course. To surround her with luxury, to anticipate her every wish, to pay her homage is his

desire and impulse. In a thousand happy homes this drama is going on, the young husband delighting to give the wife all that he can, so far as his means will allow. If he is rich he bestows on her position, jewels, a fair home, travel, everything that money can buy. If he is poor he still shares with her his wages, and works for her with cheerful alacrity. In turn, she is eager and wishful to serve and honor him. There is nothing, in the beginning of a happy married life, which a wife will withhold from her husband, except, sometimes, the very thing which would be better for him than all the sweet and easy compliance in the world. Right living on the wrong plans has held many a man back from his proper place in the Church of God, from his niche in the community to which, as a good citizen, he is entitled.

"I always went to prayer-meeting before our marriage," said one dear young wife, "but Rob was not brought up to go, and prayer-meetings bore him. It seems to be more my duty to stay at home with him when he is tired than to go and leave him alone in the evening. So that is why I miss our pastor's evening lecture in the middle of the week, and why I almost forget what a prayer-meeting is like."

The same wife, whether weary or not, always accompanies her husband to a place of amuse-

ment which he fancies he would like to attend. How shall he suspect, since she never shows him by word or sign that she has a yearning for the privileges of the church which is not satisfied? By degrees the yearning lessens. In a way, the way of devotion to her husband, the wife's theory of living is right, but she carries it on on a wrong plane. She has thrown away the chance of bringing her husband up to where she stands, and she has herself sunk.

On the other hand, the wife, religiously strong from the first, has the courage to assert and live up to her convictions, quietly and trustfully assuming that the home is to be one where God is to be openly served. The wife gives the tone to the new home, where she is the presiding genius. Her piety, her consecration, her love, wise beyond weakness, strong to bear, strong to wait, strong to suffer, exacts of her life's comrade the best and leads him onward and upward. Such homes there are, sweet with the breath of the kingdom of heaven, where the love of Jesus has so filled the heart of the one who knew its secret sweetness that it has simply brought the other into the fuller companionship possible of God's elect. Right living on the highest plane will have this reward.

Is there not, too, another peril to which we women are subject in this era of interest in beau-

tiful accessories of the household? Can we not sometimes, in our care for the machinery, overlook the thing for which it exists? Is there never the lack of discovering the inner meaning of home, that for which home exists, to be the pattern of the heavenly, through our interest in the vases, the hangings, the chairs, the tables, the china, and the silver, which are justly dear to us? Let us take care that we live on a plane which shall uplift us above the accidental and the transitory; which shall keep us serene whatever wind may blow. Right living on the right plane, that is what we should strive for, and they who strive worthily will surely reach their desired haven.

LII

THE HOUSEHOLD PROBLEM

Other subjects are sporadic in their popular interest. This, the household problem—viz., how to get the most and the best out of life without making the machinery too evident, the means rather than the end important—has all seasons for its own. Everybody has something at stake in the servant question, as we have come to call it, unconsciously showing in the phrase our unfortunate domestic limitations. It would almost seem that this part of living should be managed quietly, with dignity, and, as a matter of course, each family as independent in its orderly routine and in its management of its "help" as in the caring for and education of its children. Yet it is the exception when this is so.

Somewhere there is something much at fault, or we would not be involved in endless embarrassments and perplexities—this delicate housemother plunged into toil and care beyond her strength; the other wearily trying to find for

her kitchen women at once capable, amiable, and conscientious, who will stay when once they are found; a third inveighing violently against Swedes, Danes, Germans, Irish, and Americans, all equally unsatisfactory in her view.

The fact is that while a few well-to-do people in our own country find it convenient to employ a staff of well-trained and thoroughly efficient domestics, each with special duties, as cook, laundress, waitress, butler, etc., the great majority are contented with a single maid of all work. She may, where the family is large, be supplemented one or two days a week by a woman who comes in to wash and iron, but even this is unusual. On Mondays and Tuesdays the ladies of the family assist in the work, relieve the maid of much of the cooking, wait on the door themselves, set the tables, wash the dishes, and leave her free to struggle through the extra burdening duties of the family washing.

On other days, especially on her recurring half-holidays, the maid is assisted by the mistress and her daughters, and where one has that treasure, "a good girl," life moves along smoothly. I hold that it might always thus move when the matter is so simple that its factors are the one maid and the one mistress, granted that the contracting parties meet on a common ground of kindness, fairness, and Christian charity.

In receiving into one's home a new domestic the first obligation on the side of the employer is to make the stranger at home, an integral part of the family. Her board and lodging, as well as her wages, are part of her payment. Therefore, a pleasant and comfortably furnished room should be assigned her, with every toilet requisite—water, soap, towels, a small rocking-chair, a closet, a bureau. Her bed, especially, should be as good of its kind as any in the house. An iron bedstead painted white, with springs and a nice mattress, should be provided for the rest of a hard-working woman. Having seen that the room is neat and dainty, the thoroughly conscientious employer will exact its being kept in the same state, seeing herself that the maid has a daily hour for putting her own room in order and insisting that it be always sweet and well-aired. A set of sheets, pillow-slips, and towels should be kept for the maid's room.

Lodging being thus provided for, the house mistress will likewise observe that a working-woman should take her meals regularly and in comfort.

The ordinary Irish girl—let me say, in passing, that I have a great affection and regard for her, warm-hearted, quick-witted, lovable, if imperfect, creature that she is—the ordinary Irish girl has an extraordinary fondness for tea. Her tea-

pot simmers forever on the range, and she likes snatching a meal now and then with the aid of a cup of her favorite strong infusion.

If a midmorning cup of tea be her comfort, far be it from me to deny her this; but it must not take the place of her periodical breakfast, dinner, and supper, to which she should be expected to sit down, her meal hot and appetizing, her own dishes whole and respectable, her tablecloth clean and white. A little despotism on the part of the mistress may be necessary to establish this orderly fashion of life in the kitchen; but once established, the maid will herself prize it, and will be the better able to fulfil her duties for the healthful manner in which her days and nights go by.

One often finds an employer amusingly timid and cringing in her feeling towards her maid. "Take care; don't speak so loudly; Norah will hear you!" Or, "*Please,* Harry, come to breakfast in time; Maggie is growing so dissatisfied I'm afraid she'll leave." Or, "Oh no! Dick cannot bring his playmates into the house. Bridget won't let them tramp over her clean hall." These and similar remarks are constantly heard.

Whenever this reversal of appropriate sentiments obtains, let the mistress hope for nothing beyond toleration. Servants, like children, love

a firm and temperate, and withal entirely *just*, rule; it is "woe to the land or the home when a servant reigneth."

The person whose remarks are too vociferous should lower his tones because it is polite to do so, not on Norah's account; Master Harry should be punctual at breakfast to please his parents, not to serve the maid's convenience; and little Dick, because boys are of more consequence than halls, ought to be encouraged to bring his young friends into the house with perfect freedom. It is a great mistake to give the reins of control into the hands of a subordinate.

LIII

GOOD HOUSEKEEPING

Probably at no previous period have intelligent women known more about housekeeping than they do at present. A widely spread opinion to the contrary notwithstanding, there is nothing especially difficult or subtle in the knowledge requisite to manage a house. One must have common-sense, one must have method, one must have tact, one must bestow attention. A girl who can set type, or practise stenography, or write an article, or paint a picture, or embroider a centrepiece, or sell goods, or make a gown or bonnet, can master everything connected with housekeeping in six weeks or less, if she have a sufficient motive. Training-schools and cooking-classes and lectures on domestic economy are very helpful, but they are not *essential*, given the wish to learn and the brains to put processes and results together. In many portions of the United States skilled help cannot be found—it is simply not attainable at any

priee — and here the mother and daughters, sometimes with rude and primitive applianees, have to perform the domestie drudgery. Drudgery it inevitably beeomes when undertaken only as a task, unillumined by gentle thoughts and unleavened by ambition. We may make drudgery of any work, or we may uplift it to rare and rich nobility by the spirit we bring to it.

Still, even with the many assisting hands held out, there *are* women who know praetieally little of housekeeping. While such gifted writers as Marion Harland, Christine Terhune Herriek, Mrs. Rorer, Elizabeth Bisland, Eliza Parker, and others have devoted their talents to deseribing the best and easiest way of doing eaeh thing about the house, there is small excuse for any one's remaining in ignoranee. Yet, after all, the best way to learn is to attack the problem with both hands and a willing heart.

If you have ever bestowed a summer morning upon the basket of neatly folded and dampened clothes, you will better understand what it means to baek and shoulder-blades and elbows and hands and the soles of one's feet to wield a heavy iron. Perhaps you will be willing to forego a few frills, a few tueks, a few puffs, in view of the difficulty and labor of ironing these well, if you have done the work a few times yourself.

If you have personally washed the beautiful

flannels, which are such a comfort, cost so much money, and shrink so amazingly under careless and ill-taught handling, you will speak with insistent authority when you tell Katy that they are not to be rubbed with soap, but to be dipped up and down in tepid soapsuds; that they are to be rinsed in clean water of precisely the same temperature as the previous bath; that they are to be pulled in a certain designated way, and, above all, ironed while very damp. Katy, discerning with respect that you know what you are talking about, will follow your directions, and will probably soon take a proper pride in her skill.

So will it be with bread, that frequent disappointment; with steaks, so often charred on the outside and raw in the middle; with soups and omelets and scallops and puddings—if one knows how to bake, to broil, to mix, to combine, as she easily may know, by taking a little trouble, she can then show or teach another. She will not be above learning from the other, at need, for Bridget may in some things have a better method than her mistress, but she will not be obliged to stand by and see wicked waste, simply because she has not the knowledge which means thrift.

Our daughters at school are very much occupied with their various lessons and their work in this or that department. Still, on Satur-

days and in vacations it is a pleasant thing for them to learn, bit by bit, the niceties of home management, so that, insensibly, a girl, helping mother, learns the mysteries of cooking, assumes the oversight of the family table, gains a quick eye for defects, sees that the china is lintless and the silver bright, and, at a glance, can tell what is wrong in bedmaking, where the deficiency is in the room which should look home-like and is instead grim and forbidding. Let the mother yield some of her cares to the blithe young daughter; let the latter bring her taste, her sympathy with modern fashions, and her strength of nerve and gayety of temper to the solution of the household problem.

There comes to every woman in middle life a season when she needs and has earned the right to rest. What a blessed relief, then, just to drop the housekeeping wholly for a time, letting the daughter become responsible for the home table, for the management of the money, for the maid—if there be one—for father's comfort, for the children's pleasure! A dear, grown-up daughter may save her mother years of weakness and pain if she be allowed to step in at just the right moment, and the value to herself of such experience is practically past estimation. It will make her, in years to be, a better and happier wife for some good man.

LIV

LOVE IS THE FULFILLING OF THE LAW

When all is said that can be said, the wise counsels given, the discretion on both sides recommended, the wages and the work settled on a fair and firm basis, there still remains an ingredient to be dropped into the crucible where simmers the household problem. As when, having filled to the brim a crystal goblet, so that a single drop the more would overflow the edge, you may yet softly sprinkle sugar therein and it will sift its way into the small, unseen spaces between the drops, so to the puzzle of household management you may always bring—love.

Fair wages by all means, and wages promptly paid. As high a rate of wages as the maid's ability and the *standard of your neighbors in the community* will justify. Clearly defined obligations and reciprocal duties, privileges—I dislike the word, yet it stands to the maid for her right to go regularly to the church of her choice, her right to see her friends, her right to enter-

tain her friends in the house which gives her a share in its home life, and is for her a vital word —all these and much more enter into one's thought of the maid-servant within one's gates, and these are doubled and trebled and more or less complicated when one's domestic force means two, three, or a half-dozen persons. It is not ease one purchases with a large establishment.

But none of these supplant one single strong element in making the bond between employer and employed permanent and satisfactory. Try love. Give it in unstinted measure to that lonely foreign-born girl, not older than your young daughter, and she will repay you by loving back with the whole wealth of her heart. Take an interest in *her*, in her health, her looks, her spendings, and her savings, her new gown, her sister's children, the young man who calls on her of an evening. Care about her and hers. Be sincerely sorry if there is illness or trouble in that tenement home where she takes her Sunday night tea, and put yourself out to show in some practical way that your sympathy is real.

Erelong you will discover that you have gained a friend in a quarter where friendship is worth having. I hear people talk of the "ingratitude" of the class from which we draw our servants, and frankly I confess that I do not understand

by what right we elaim gratitude for simply aecepting serviee which we buy and for whieh we pay. The word is a misnomer in this relation. We do, however, reeeive all that we give, and more, if our giving is free and spontaneous.

I know a eertain family in whieh for thirty years in the varions braneh es—married daughters, sisters, ete.—there has been an unfailing supply of exeellent servants from one eonneetion in Ireland. Mary lived with these people a dozen years, and left them for a home of her own, but not till she had sent to the "old eomntry" for Susan to take her plaee. Other sisters and eousins came aeross the water, all finding homes with the friends of whom I speak; and reeently in my hearing one of the eheerful, useful, eapable women of the set I refer to said, "It 'll be a sad day for us when none of the kin finds a plaee with the dear L.'s." The *dear* L.'s! Said one of *them* to me onee: "We don't know in the faintest degree what it means to have bothers about servants. All onrs are brought to us from one family, and have been sinee my grandmother's day."

From time to time in the daily papers among the reeords of deaths we happen npon a line telling in brief of the "faithful serviee" extending over twenty or thirty years of some man or woman who has devotedly attaehed his or her

personality to a household in trusted and appreciated loyalty. Such records might more frequently be read were we more careful to hallow the bond, so intimate and so easily made golden by love and kindness, regulated in its expression, let me add, by common-sense.

Altruism sometimes overlaps propriety, as in one instance where a lady, anxious to give her maids the "home feeling," allowed them her house in which to give a large company, herself and husband meanwhile going away for the night. Next morning, on her return, this mistress, whose love had not been guided by common-sense, beheld in her pretty drawing-room a scene of wreckage and ruin, for which she was directly responsible; and, remonstrated with, cook and housemaid indignantly left at once, as might have been expected.

Love must not be weakness. It must not be folly. It must sometimes reprove, rebuke, exhort. It must be able to discipline, if needful, to exact its own in the way of what is just and right. Love is the fulfilling of the law, even in the relationship between mistress and maid, and this sort of love will solve the hardest household problem.

LV

THE LORD'S LEADINGS

NOTHING is more natural than the deep desire of the young Christian and of the Christian past youth, but earnest and loving with the love of the tried and the true, to be up and doing for Christ. Often this desire is so peremptory and so insistent that it blinds one to the fact that the Lord's work is here as well as yonder, in our own kitchens, streets, and drawing-rooms as well as on the outlying posts of service.

A sweet young girl, wistful and eager to fill every day with some blessed and direct work for Jesus, was one day walking on a commonplace errand near her own house. A stranger paused to inquire the way, and the information was courteously given. Then, to the girl's heart, not too much occupied with its own concerns to be impressed with the want of another, came the thought that the woman who had asked the question was aged, looked feeble and bewildered, and bore the marks of poverty. The girl turned,

retraced her steps, found the woman, and took her to the place she sought. It was a half-hour out of her day, and she discovered in that space that the stranger, just dismissed from a hospital, had come from her own home to seek and save a deeply tempted soul, a soul in extremity. The young girl took the ministry on herself—a ministry of love, care, and time that extended over months. This was a leading of the Lord.

We may not, perhaps, be able to invest with much glamour of romance a mission of the Lord to hard-working Mary, bending over her tubs in our own laundry. Even to go a little further, it seems finer to leave home and endure hardness in some circumstances, extending relief and showing compassion to the poor and the wretched in a crowded city neighborhood, than to give companionship to an aged relative sitting alone by our own fire. Both kinds of work are right and are the Lord's, but we should be very sure of the Lord's leading when we choose between them. Are we quite as ready to live in the radiant joyousness of Christ's realized love and constant presence in our own village as in a distant field? Is our own tired father, a little cross and fault-finding after a wearying day at business, as much an object of tender solicitude in our eyes as somebody's less worthy and very disreputable father who lounges around saloons,

and does no work that he can help, but for whom a mission, properly, sets wide its doors of blessing?

Understand, I am speaking no word against the home mission, or the city mission, or the foreign mission work, for these I dearly love. Only, for some of us, the Lord's leadings are not in these directions, but are more strictly limited —to the little brother needing help with his Latin lesson, the fragile mother with an aching head on her pillow, the friend, gay of manner and genial of temper, who is in danger of drifting into evil associations.

On the other hand, there are those who are called, sternly and strongly, to go forth, out into the world, up into the New England valley, among the hills where the candle of faith burns feebly and the churches languish for lack of enthusiasm, out into the pathways of sorrow and the purlieus of sin, over the ocean to the heathen. If it be a God's call, and you heed it, wherever it lead it will lead to blessedness.

LVI

EXTRAVAGANCE IN LIVING

I HAVE so often resented the imputation to women of extravagance in domestic management that I hesitate in taking up, in even acknowledging that there is, the other side. But one must admit that there is much which needs to be said in plain words to wives and daughters with regard to the pressure which they sometimes thoughtlessly bring on the bread-winner of the family, the husband and father, whose daily work and daily wage stand between the household and want, and provide for it comfort and luxuries.

To live beyond our means is an American temptation, perhaps it is the most common American sin. People desire to appear as well as their neighbors: they wish their homes to be beautifully furnished and appointed: they care more than in a former day for elegance in dress, and society is more than ever imperious in its exactions. Retrenchment is not easy. In a false position, one dreads to have poverty suspected.

Many people lack the moral courage to say simply that they cannot afford this or that expenditure, and both fathers and mothers are occasionally weak and cowardly when the question is of indulging the caprices of young people, or giving an idolized daughter an outfit for the season, which they cannot afford. A gray-haired man, who has nearly reached his sixtieth year, and whose career through his youth and early manhood was a succession of honors, is to-day in a penitentiary because he could not say "no" when his daughters urged him to a style of living which could be supported only, in his case, by systematic theft.

It is easy to say, and it is often true, that the women of a family are ignorant of the amount they may reasonably spend because the man of the house keeps his affairs to himself. Entire candor as to income and outgo should be the rule in domestic life, the family thus knowing what it can and what it cannot do in given circumstances, and presenting a united front to the world. A husband does wisely who takes his wife, as it is her right to be taken, into his fullest financial confidence. A wife should insist on her privilege of sharing knowledge as well as of bearing burdens. Women are not, as a rule, deficient in common-sense, and the wife of a man on a salary can usually arrive at a very clear conclusion—at

least, approximately — as to what she ought to spend over and above the necessary amount for food and clothing. Necessary expenses are not extravagances. The word tells its own story. It is the going beyond bounds, the indulging fancies and gratifying impulses, which becomes extravagant, as opposed to what is essential.

One of the common faults of Americans is a disdain for small economies. We do not count car fares; we buy the pretty trifle, which costs only a few cents; we accumulate useless things in our houses; if we have a fad, it is always leading us to spend a dollar or two for this and the other thing in connection with it, as wheelmen and amateur photographers can testify. We take the drawing-room car for a little journey, which might comfortably be made in the ordinary coach. In numerous small ways our money drips away, and leaves little to show for it in value received.

A thousand cases of extravagance in smaller or larger degree result only in undignified squabbling at home, in petty irritations, in tears and frowns, in subtraction from the wholesome gayety of life. But the thousand-and-one case occurs, and there is a crash which startles the community, brings disgrace on a hitherto unsullied name, drags a circle of kindred and friends into a gulf of sorrow. The thing which cannot

go on has been attempted, and has finally and suddenly reached its ultimate end, as might have been predicted. And then, how tawdry seems the useless finery! how absurd look the foolish strivings after display! how unwise and stupid appears the scheme of living which built its house upon the sand!

If we need the word in season, friends, let us heed it. The sensible and judicious husband and wife will plan together for the family good. If there be stinting, it will not be in wholesome food, nor on the children's education, nor on good reading, nor on anything which has to do with the church and the family charities. It will take the direction of cutting off what is merely for vanity, for ease, for show, for wastefulness, for doing what our neighbor does, without reference to our own honesty and self-respect.

LVII

THE TRIALS OF THE OVER-SENSITIVE

"THAT dear child is so very sensitive," said a mother, pityingly, as her eleven-year-old daughter, with tear-filled eyes, stumbled out of the room, knocking over a footstool in her haste to be gone. "I am always on the alert to save her. Few days pass in which Ethel does not suffer keenly. Her father and brothers are not always considerate, and the child's gentle spirit is easily wounded. Now she will cry for a half-hour and be wretched the remainder of the day, and all because papa was vexed that she forgot to call at the post-office on her way home from school."

"Is it part of her daily duty to bring home the mail?" I asked.

"Yes," said the mother, a little reluctantly; "but you know how it is with school-girls. They are at the age when it is not possible always to remember an engagement. Their little lives are so full of pleasures, and they have not yet learned to assume cares, these little girls. I tell

papa that Ethel will be more thoughtful by-and-by, and that we eannot expeet as mueh steadiness of her as of her great, strong brothers."

This golden-haired, beautiful Ethel, her one daughter and her youngest ehild, was the darling of my friend's heart and the very apple of her eye. The mother lingered about a few moments, restless and uneomfortable, and then stole out of the room, and presently I heard her moving about overhead in Ethel's pretty little ehamber. Down the street I eaught from the window a glimpse of papa, whose hasty speeeh had wrought the misehief. His broad baek and plodding steps seemed pathetie to me as I thought how tired he was after his day's work, and knew that he was wending his way to the post-offiee to perform Ethel's negleeted errand. Everybody made to feel more or less in the wrong beeause one petted ehild had been reproved, and had gone off grieved in consequenee! It did not appear quite fair.

It was not of Ethel's little fit of the sulks nor of her mother's mistaken tenderness that I thought longest on that sweet autumnal afternoon, for one thought starts another, and I reealled this person and that, who had gone mueh beyond childhood, enduring keen and often needless anguish beeause of a disposition too readily sensitive to blame or fancied unkindness. Sueh a

disposition torments its possessor, inflicting pain to which the blow of a whip would be light; yet, strange to say, it would almost appear that the unfortunately over-sensitive person watches for slights and welcomes wounds, so often are they received when none are intended.

In the family the opportunities for hurting the sensibilities of the easily injured one are manifold. A chance word at the table, a word unsaid when praise or compliment was desired, a bit of criticism, however gentle, an absent or preoccupied look, will upset the dear one for the day, and the atmosphere will become electric. It is always *the* dear one, mother, elder sister, sometimes father or brother—though rarely, for the stronger sex are less given than ours to what in children we call tantrums—whose feelings are hurt. Singularly, in most households the ill-tempered and pesky are more studied and in effect more beloved than the amiable and sensible. There are gray-haired Ethels, who have gone on through long lives exacting forbearance and consideration from their relatives on the score of their remarkable sensitiveness, and so they will do to the very end.

And in the larger family of the church, who does not know the brother or the sister whose feet are too easily trodden upon, who withdraws from this and the other department of work,

and will no longer support his pastor or continue in fellowship with the friends in the society, hitherto his comrades and trusted companions, because he has been ignored or opposed or wounded? It becomes each of us to ask whether we have never erred in this way, whether we have at no period put a stumbling-block in a brother's road through our jealousy for ourselves.

Over-sensitiveness is often the product of a morbid love of self. Vanity takes fire at a touch, and vanity is resentful and implacable. Except in the earliest years, outside help avails little to overcome a defect so grave. Children may be guided towards a better and happier life and taught to cultivate the charity that seeketh not her own; but in older persons this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting. If, as may happen, you or I are over-sensitive, is it not worth while at once to set about eradicating a fault so grave and with consequences so undesirable in our social intercourse?

LVIII

RANDOM PRAYERS

THERE is a need of definiteness in our prayers. One observes this in the prayer-meeting, where often the petitions cover a wide range of topics, but miss the particular wants of the hour, the place, and the people assembled. And most of us know that in our private prayers, our tranquil closet seasons, we must occasionally arrest ourselves in the midst of unconsidered, vague, and, so to speak, random words. Prayer is not only a spiritual exercise, it is an intellectual effort, and requires thought and care, precisely as does any other mental and physical endeavor. What to say and how to say it are here as important as in any other field where we converse, prefer request, or express gratitude.

But, going a step further, how strange it seems that we forego the privilege of telling our Father exactly what we desire, putting into loose phrases of no special meaning our hopes and aims, alluding in general terms to the conversion of our fam-

ilies and friends and the reviving of the church, as though the end in question would be a happy circumstance, yet carrying no one person or group of persons on our hearts to the mercy-seat. This, too, in the face of our own belief in God's individual care of and for us, and of his own gracious declaration to every one of his children, "I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine." The pages of Scripture are strewn with promises to the man who prays, with narratives of direct answers to importunate and believing prayers, and yet we, not merely because of little faith, but often through the merest heedlessness and lack of thought, go groping on, without seeking divine strength in any earnest way, without asking specifically for the thing we yearn to have, yet do not ask for except in a random and half-hearted manner.

It would be well for those who have not given this subject much thought hitherto to take a look at their own ordinary practice. Possibly the answer to some who complain that their prayers never bring them a return of blessing would be that as yet they have never really prayed.

When it reaches the sacred ground of the inner consciousness, that plane where all souls stand solitary and stripped of conventional disguises in the presence of the Lord, how few of us even there and then are fully sincere in our

confession and our application for relief. The sin which most easily besets us is a sin we are apt to regard with a measure of toleration. The weak point in our armor, easily seen by others, is not always discerned by ourselves. We may be honest as the day in our pecuniary dealings, scornful of any meanness or indirection in our speech, our integrity among men may be flawless, but in our homes we may be difficult to live with, irritable and irritating, uncertain in our tempers, morose and fault-finding in disposition. Perhaps our lot is cast with uncongenial people. The members of our own families may rasp our nerves and wear us out with their foibles and exactions. In this sphere of the daily life, if anywhere, we need the help which comes by continual and explicit prayer, prayer addressed to the only heart in the universe that can understand and the only arm strong enough to save us. One would think that at least in their prayers men and women would be candid, but the human heart is deceitful, and most of us know how gently we tolerate our own weaknesses and with what reserves we own, even on our knees and alone, that we are "miserable sinners." It is only when we arrive at the point of feeling and deploring the sin we acknowledge that we cry out to be delivered from it and receive assistance to put our prayers into practice.

The habit of prayer, once established, is both a safeguard and a comfort, a retreat and a defence, in this world of trouble and perplexity. But to get all the good the Lord wants to give us, we must pray with the literalness of children and the definiteness of those who are in extreme earnestness, not insult the King above us with random prayers which have not even the merit of being attentive and which lack the virtue of sincerity.

LIX

THE WEAKNESS OF GIVING UP THE BATTLE

Not long ago the people of a beautiful Southern town were startled and horrified by the suicide of a girl whose lover, after a long engagement, had shown himself weary of the bond between them. The circumstances were sad, the affair tragic, and society was deeply moved with pity at the untimely end of one who had been useful, admired, and popular in a refined circle. Recently a ripple of compassion and horror agitated for a day or two the cities of New York and Brooklyn, the occasion again being the death by her own act of a young girl, a graduate of one of our best schools, and an enthusiastic art student. In the second case, failure to pass an examination successfully, after a long and arduous period of endeavor, is supposed to have temporarily clouded the girl's mind, and forced her across the narrow line which physicians tell us defines the border-land between sanity and insanity.

Would it not be well, in our thought and talk at home and elsewhere, to emphasize more than we do the great sacredness of human life, the privilege of living and working, and the sin of flying to death as a refuge when the battle goes against us? At the moment of defeat, in the hour of a heart-break, it is hard for the sufferer to realize that the trouble is a mere episode, that it will pass, that in a few months, or at most in a few years, it will recede into unimportance, or that experience will show that nothing else would have been so good for the individual, so sweet in its fruitage, so blessed to every one involved in the individual's circle of influence, as just that disappointment or defeat.

Yet thousands can testify that the outcome of sorrow is not only disciplinary and by way of training, but positively towards fuller happiness and more benignant living. I knew intimately, some years ago, a woman who told me that once in a critical hour of her life she stood holding in her hand a vial containing a deadly poison, Satan at her elbow tempting her to drink it and escape from the apparently bottomless gulf of distresses in which she was plunged. She resisted the wicked and insane impulse, God helping her to overcome it, and lived to see that only such unusual trials as were hers could have given her unique powers and opportunities. "Tell the

tempted," she said, "that the only safe way is always, when the Father's hand presents the bitter cup, to drink it, saying 'Thy will be done.'" It is not long since I talked with this lady and heard from her own lips what the goodness of God had enabled her to do—the story of the hundred-fold harvest rewarding the faithful seed-sowing. Suppose she had weakly abandoned the field, leaving a dishonored name and the legacy of a never-waning regret to her family and friends. How much nobler to endure and to do the day's work, and to trust God for the end, and to the end!

Young people are very apt to regard stepping-stones as finalities. A lover breaks faith. The girl, in her own sight humiliated and hurt to the core of her being, shrinks from sight and feels as if her world were in ruins. The truth is that nobody is ever humiliated by the wrongdoing of another, and that he who can be false and fickle is not what love had fancied, and is merely a broken ideal. Broken ideals bruise the heart, but, if it is strong and stanch, they do not break it. I think of a life, absolutely angelic in its continual beautiful largesse of love, its sheltering wings to the aged and the child, its grace of purity, its might of tenderness, yet there was a day, a score of years ago, when she who lives it saw herself deserted by the man who had her

trothplight, and sat in a darkened chamber all the day his wedding-bells rang out. It isn't only that she is happier, not being that man's wife; she is richer in privilege, stronger for work, sweeter, more useful, more sympathetic, diviner by the touch of the Master's hand that bade her suffer and helped her to rise and shake off the bondage of pain.

To the student who has lived at high pressure and strained every nerve to reach the goal, it is an unspeakable disappointment to fail in an examination. But examiners are fallible men and women, and examinations are not always the best nor the truest indexes of progress, and, anyway, if one can but have philosophy, there will come another day when, with increased study and another endeavor, the examination will be successfully undergone. I know that six months in a young life looks like a large section of eternity, that sometimes the disappointment means criticism and censure at home and loss of money, which was hardly earned and ill to spare. Nevertheless, if one has made diligent and faithful preparation, one must not be disheartened. It is, somehow, all right, even if it does not look so, and you will live to see that it is so. The foolish and the weak thing is to be crushed; the most unwise thing in the world is to slip down in desperation, unable to take the comfort that

. . . "the darkest day,
Live till to-morrow will have passed away."

Soul and body are such close partners that both must be relied upon for help when the situation seems almost intolerable. For the soul, seek the good old weapon called all-prayer. It never failed any who wielded it aright. For the body, no matter how intense the trial, at least make an effort to eat and to sleep. Do nothing rashly, without having taken food and without a night's rest. And always remember that it is ignoble to run away. Only weakness gives up the battle.

LX

AN AFTER-THE-HOLIDAYS TALK

THE holidays seem to me to be the golden season of the year. We feel a special exhilaration as we enter into their precincts; our friendships, our tender relations with kith and kin, our interest in people whom we may lovingly help by the cordial word or the timely gift, are all strengthened and intensified and quickened by the incidents and opportunities of the blessed holiday season. The chief peril to fear at this time springs from our innate tendency to reaction. On the hill-top to-day is often in the valley to-morrow. By the height of privilege to which we are occasionally lifted some of us must measure the depth to which we fall; our very activity, our impulsive generosity, our beautiful self-denial at one period, excusing to our consciences the inertia and the selfishness of another time. We forget that our chief obligation in the world is to let our light shine, not now and then, but always, with a steady, unwavering glow.

Now, if before Christmas it was our chief and most delightful study to give pleasure to this or that dear one, if we lay in wait to ascertain what course of action would make the home most truly a type of heaven on Christmas Day, think what gratification, what joy, what fulness of pleasure, would be afforded could we keep this sort of thing up all the time. Not precisely in the bestowal of gifts; that is not to be expected; but along the lines of tender thoughtfulness, of courteous speech, and of graceful consideration for others' rights, others' wishes, and others' happiness. Such a carrying of the Christmas spirit into daily living everywhere would rebuke impatience, remove irritability, sweeten many a bitter cup, and impart strength to weakness and solace to pain.

The new year, arbitrary as it is as a division of time, brings to me, at least, quite as it did in my childhood, the consciousness of new purpose, of a chance to be and to do, in a new and consecrated life, better than in the past. Here is a white page. What shall I write on it? Here is an open door. How shall I enter it? Here is an angel's voice. What does it say to me? Here is a gift from God. How shall I receive it? Oh, the sense of fulness, of power, of the divine nearness in the new year! But I am apt, as the freshness wears off, to lose some of this wonder-

ful and charming realization of a benediction in the new year, and it does not remain new — it soon grows old and worn and very much like those that have preceded it. This is not the year's fault; it is wholly mine, as very likely it is yours; and might we not both gain a great deal if, taking our present new year, one hour at a time, we should live up to the God-given benedictions which every hour brings?

To our little children the space between year's end and year's end looks interminable. They still live long days, and their engagements do not hurry them on as ours do. Life to childhood, as compared with life to grown people, is the leisurely progress of the foot traveller, or the gentle movement of the stage-coach, contrasted with the impetuous rush of the railway train. We slip through the busy months so fast that the anniversaries take us by surprise, so swiftly one treads on the heels of its fellow; but the little ones know the joy of waiting and longing as well as the joy of possession.

To keep the holiday elixir of delight through the work-day levels as something to take and to give—this is the ideal attainment and should be the constant aspiration.

LXI

OVERDOING IN KINDNESS

"My dear," said a lady to a young relative, who was insisting that a delicate mother should not wear herself out by undertaking some work on which the mother's heart was set, "you tire her a great deal more by your opposition than she would tire herself by doing as she wishes to." It was true, though it was hard for the loving daughter to understand why. Youth is eager, imperious, and strong of will, and often, in its very beautiful and unselfish impulsiveness, it wounds those it would help. One has to arrive at a certain place in life to comprehend that the largest kindness which may be done to any one is, in nine cases out of ten, just to let her alone. Especially in the dealings of the young with the old, of grown-up sons and daughters with the parents who stand a generation in front of them, there is need of caution, for even kindness may fail of its good intention if it be overdone.

Everybody has noticed and many have smiled at the quick sensitiveness of the aged where their acceptance of aid in things smaller or greater seems to imply a falling off of power. Probably the real reason why people as a rule object to growing old, and cling desperately to the receding skirts of youth, is because, little by little, age does grow conscious of infirmity, age feels that it is pushed from its position in the activities of life and forced to stand aside. When age is still far away, a mere shadow in the distance, there are those who forecast the future and rebel against its limitations, and they are more than ordinarily ready to resist when their juniors lay, though softly and sweetly, stumbling-blocks in their way. It makes them a little difficult to get on with, and they are brusquer and more prickly than they would be but for the constant endeavor to hold their own, which has the effect of all struggle, and toughens and hardens the one who conquers, so that there is a little tarnish on the gold of victory.

Yet this is better than the too easy giving up, the relinquishing of privilege, the loss of standing-ground which we sometimes see. I have known a mother at fifty, when she should have been in the splendor and prime of her years, abandon her appropriate chair of state in the family councils simply because her strong-willed

children were too much for her. Their overzeal in kindness effaced her as inevitably as if they had treated her with rudeness or neglect. In the latter alternative, indeed, she would have had more scope for growth, for the wind and the sun and the dew of heaven are better for the rooted plant than is the breath of the hot-house. Few human beings are improved by constant living in a glass case, and when a human being ceases to grow and develop, he or she then, and not till then, becomes past usefulness and a cumberer of the ground. By what right, by what excuse, do children ever thus impose an arresting kindness on their parents?

Generally speaking, to be very plain about it, children should not interfere too much with the mother's freedom of action. It is a Sunday morning. "You surely are not going to church?" says Jane; "in this weather?" adds Elizabeth; "and the church will be as cold as a barn, and you will get your death of grippe or pneumonia," supplements Katharine, till among them they either persuade the poor lady to yield against her inclination, or so excite her by their well-meant resistance to it that she is in no frame of mind to enjoy the sanctuary.

All the while it has never occurred to one of the girls that her mother knows her own preference, has sufficient common-sense to take pre-

cautions against the weather, and has a perfect right to choose her course and act with independence. I know instances where the affectionate despotism of daughters hinders their mothers from taking a share in church work for which they are eminently qualified, and absolutely ages and invalidates the elder women in lines where they would be most valued and most useful.

This is not a plea against considerate sweetness and gentle treatment on the part of children where old people are concerned; it is a small word by way of reminder to those who do not know or comprehend how too much zeal in sincere, well-meant kindness may be as deleterious as its opposite. Not always do age and youth see things alike. The point of view differs. Age, it must be admitted, is often capricious and unreasonable, but youth, which we all have had, is so great an advantage in itself that it should learn magnanimity and restrain its desire to rule. One of these days, these flying days, the youngest of us all will, it may be, remember and regret what can never be atoned for.

LXII

FRANKNESS BETWEEN FRIENDS

Friendship at its best is the most educational experience possible to men and women, for, since by its very existence it demands and implies reciprocity of sentiment and mutual obligation, in every friendship worth the name there is a continual leading out of self and a continual growth towards excellence.

No real friendship, flawless as a gem and spherical and serene, can be maintained in dignity and aspiration to the highest ideal where the parties to it are afraid, for any reason, to be entirely sincere with one another. If, for any cause, there is conscious hedging by this one and fencing by that; if at times one friend or the other approaches thin ice in the familiar intercourse, and mentally looks out for a danger signal, the friendship is incomplete and fails of attaining its highest plane.

It is not so much that a friend desires to invest a friend with all lovable and beautiful qualities,

as that the qualities themselves have brought about the friendship, and are taken for granted, as fragrance and warmth and sunshine and atmosphere are taken as of course. Friendship is founded on congeniality; it can only live where there are fitness and responsiveness. In its varying degrees it may sometimes bind the younger very closely to the older, the unlearned to the scholarly, the toiling to the affluent; but, unless in exceptional cases, it reaches its best expression where environment and intellectual conditions are favorable and to some extent equal. There must be kinship of mind and communion of interest to begin the friendship. For its growth, propinquity, a common faith, reverence for the individuality of each on the part of both, and an unstudied altruism are probably essential. In the strongest friendship there is jealousy, not of the mean and base sort, which is an exaggeration of self-love and lies in wait for offence, but of the pure and noble kind, which exacts from the beloved one that which is worthy his best endeavor, which can accept nothing half-hearted and nothing trivial in a friend's thought and performance.

The friendship which is at once a personal offering and a rejoicing in the finest development of the friend will not hesitate at the truth, nor build itself on anything lower than the truth.

Entire candor between friends supposes in them a nobility which does not cry for compliment and praise, but which does claim and appreciate sincerity. Not the childish and petulant phrase, "Tell me my faults and I'll tell you yours," is meant in this relation, but the instant answering of soul to soul in an outgo of never-ceasing helpfulness.

Such a friendship may exist between man and man, or between woman and woman, or, perhaps oftenest, between man and woman. When in the latter case it reaches its fullest flower of beauty in marriage, it becomes a type and symbol of that divine harmony which subsists between Christ and the Church. Husband and wife must be friends in the truest sense if their marriage is to mean what Heaven intends marriage to be—the most of heaven which can be bestowed on earth and expressed in an earthly home. But friendship is not necessarily a thing of sex—it is a thing of soul. Two men, loving one another as men can love, clinging to one another through all vicissitude, believing in one another and holding one another sternly to the best by reason of their love, realize such fulness of devotion as the Bible sets forth in the idyl of David and Jonathan. Nay, did not our Lord Himself, yearning for human sympathy, among His disciples select one who has come down through the ages as

"that disciple whom Jesus loved"? What a beautiful distinction, and how suggestive to every Bible student, showing into what secret of the Lord some may enter, leaning on Jesus' bosom!

Friendship of woman for woman is so common, yet so rare and so blessed at its best, that we forget to eulogize it among life's finer forces. Everywhere it exists, everywhere it shows how firm and loyal and generous and long-tenured the pleasant relation may be. We find it in literature and in history, but we need not go there to look for it, since examples of it are in our own village, in our own street, in our own church. Free from petty self-seeking, above all vanity, united in endeavor, and strong in the same hope for this world and the next, the friendships of women go on from childhood to gray hairs.

Between friends, of whatever degree, let there be the assurance of perfect candor. Part of the price must never be kept back. We shall love one another more, not less, if we give at times the helping hand and say the word which means disillusion for the moment only, that in the next there may be clearer knowledge, the cobwebs swept away, and the sunshine pouring its light into every corner of the soul.

LXIII

THE HOUSE OF OBED EDOM

THE house of Obed Edom,
  Where safe the ark abode,
What time were wars and fightings
  On every mountain road,
What time was pitched the battle
  In every valley fair,
The house of Obed Edom
  Had peace beyond compare.

With famine on the border
  And fury in the camp,
With the starving children huddled
  In the black tent's shivering damp,
With the mothers crying sadly
  And every moan a prayer—
In the house of Obed Edom
  Was neither want nor care.

The fields of Obed Edom,
  No foeman trod them down;

The towers of Obed Edom
Were like a fortressed town;
And only grace and gladness
Came speeding on the road
To the house of Obed Edom,
Wherein the ark abode.

And far and near they told it,
The men who passed that way,
How fell Jehovah's blessing
On that home by night and day;
How the smallest to the greatest
Had joy and hope and love,
While the roof of Obed Edom
Was watched by God above.

The line of Obed Edom
Is on the earth to-day;
In the house of Obed Edom
Still he may safely stay
Who, dearer than all treasure
For which men toil and plod,
Shall prize the covenant-blessing,
The hallowed ark of God.

And never strife nor clamor
Shall break the tranquil spell
In which our Lord's beloved
Forever safely dwell.

In the house of Obed Edom,
In sunlight or in dark,
Abides the ceaseless blessing
That rests within the ark.

LXIV

A BLESSED OPPORTUNITY

God gave me something very sweet to be mine
own this day:
A precious opportunity, a word for Christ to say;
A soul that my desire might reaeh, a work to do
for Him;
And now I thank Him for this graee ere yet the
light grows dim.

No serviee that He sends me on ean be so wel-
eome aye
To guide a pilgrim's weary feet within the
narrow way,
To share the tender Shepherd's quest, and so
by brake and fen
To find for Him his wandering ones, the erring
sons of men.

I did not seek this blessed thing; it came a rare
surprise,
Flooding my heart with dearest joy, as, lifting
wistful eyes,

Heaven's light upon a kindling face shone
plain and clear on mine;
And there an unseen third, I felt, was waiting
One divine.

So in this twilight hour I kneel, and pour my
grateful thought
In song and prayer to Jesus for the gifts this
day hath brought.
Sure never service is so sweet, nor life hath so
much zest,
As when He bids me speak for Him, and then
He does the rest.

LXV

INTERRUPTED

Into the midst of the music,
The joy and the fulness of life,
There swept a strange clangor; then silence,
A stillness more startling than strife.
We heard not the sound of the trumpets,
The bugles died out on the blast.
Could we march in that desolate waiting
For the thrill of a song that was past?

Could we work when our comrades no longer
Breathed courage and hope in the ear?
Could we triumph when sorrow and sighing
Had palsied our hearts, until fear
Swept over our souls like the shadow
Of some brooding evil to come?
Alas! we were stricken; the music
That had given us courage was dumb.

Then down from the beautiful heaven
A word came, the word of the Lord,

And it struck on our languor and trouble,
A dominant, silvery chord.
"Stay not for the music," it bade us;
"The music has only gone on.
You will hear it again in the glory
That waits when the day's work is done."

So now, though but faintly and seldom
We hear the sweet bugle-call blow,
We march in the path that our Leader
Marked out in His conflict with woe.
Some day we will hear the grand chorals,
Some day we will stand on the shore
Where the comrades already are waiting—
The music has gone on before.

THE END

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